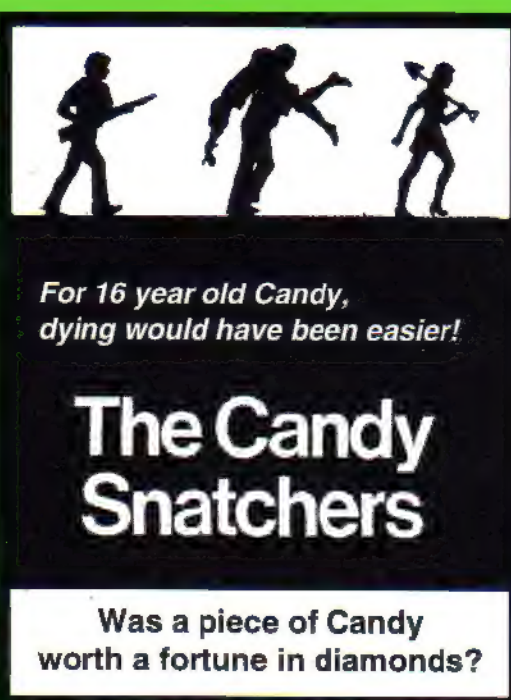
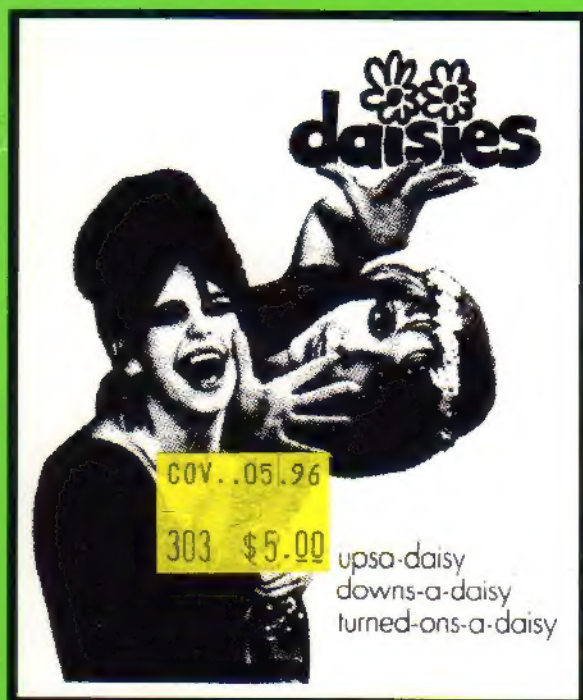


Your Guide to Cult Movies, Arthouse Oddities, Drive-In Swill, and Underground Obscurities!

SHOCK CINEMA

NUMBER 8

\$ 5.00



Reviewed in this issue:

- Expresso Bongo
- Girl in Gold Boots
- Who Killed Teddy Bear?
- Moonchild
- Fast Company
- Bye Bye Monkey
- Black Gunn
- God's Angry Man
- Street of No Return
- Let My Puppets Come
- Pink Narcissus
- Bad Boy Bubby
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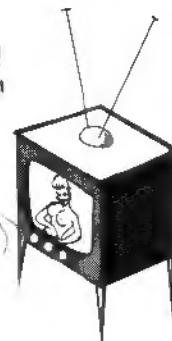
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Welcome to the latest sloping of SHOCK CINEMA, the review 'zine devoted to alternative cinema & video—from the arthouse to the outhouse. And unlike many other film mags, which suck up to their subjects like a two-bit whore, SHOCK CINEMA is *not here to sell you a goddamned thing* (except the magazine, of course). So even if you disagree with our opinions, at least we aren't lying through our asses in order to hawk our crappy, no-budget flicks or get a mailbox full of freebies from distributors. Although I strive to uncover the most unheard-of flicks, I also try to toss in some movies that might seem a tad mainstream to seen-it-all New Yorkers, but could be revelations to somebody sitting on a stump in Forkedick, Missouri. Because while Manhattanites can effortlessly catch a long-overdue revival of WHO KILLED TEDDY BEAR? at the Film Forum, folks who don't live in NYC (you know, the *sane people*) don't have a clue about its grungy charms.

If you're a regular reader and have already rifled through this edition, you'll notice several changes. First, there's an upgrade of the cover, complete with that goddamn-ugly bar code, which will hopefully get this slimy li'l rag into larger retail outlets who won't touch a magazine without it. More importantly, SHOCK CINEMA is now offering ad-space, which will not only get the word out to our 5,000 we'll-buy-anything readers, but will allow SC to (finally) come out on a more regular basis, with TWO schlock-crammed issues every year, in April and October. Yes, you read that right, diehard subscribers. For the first time in history, you'll actually *know* when SC will arrive in stores 'n' mailboxes. Sure, I'd love to increase that to three issues a year in the near future, but I'll take that one step at a time for now...

SUBSCRIPTION POLICY/BACK ISSUES: Single issues are \$5 apiece (with checks/money orders made payable to me, Steve Puchalski), and to calm down any whining about my raising the price by a buck, we're offering 3-issue subscriptions at the old price of a measly \$12 (overseas: \$15). What a bargain!...As for back issues: #1-4 are sold out; but 5, 6 and 7 are still available for \$4 apiece ppd. (and despite numerous requests, I'm *not* Xeroxing any out-of-print issues, so once they're gone, you're shit out of luck).

Additional news: In May, those fine British publishers at Headpress will be releasing a collection of reviews from my '80s fanzine, SLIMETIME. Yes, that means 200 pages of my choicest rants (back in the days when I was *really* opinionated) in a gorgeous book you'll be proud to keep on your bar or next to the toilet. Check the back cover for more information, and if your local bookstore doesn't stock it, DEMAND that they do (or else, drop me a line and I'll tell you how to obtain a copy).

Next, let me remind all the readers that the only way I know what you want in the future is if you WRITE and TELL ME. That's why it's great to run into longtime fans at a convention, like N.J.'s Chiller Theatre, where you can get an honest opinion while sucking down overpriced beers at the hotel's bar. To make contact even easier, SHOCK CINEMA has stumbled blindly into the '90s with its own e-mail address, at

ShockCin@aol.com. Drop me a quick hello, or send me some input for the next Film Flotsam/Reader's Recommendations section (which, as you can see, has gotten rather anorexic lately)...As an additional note, if any readers happen to be sitting on old ad slicks or rare videos that might be good SHOCK material, please let me know. I'm constantly digging for new info, and will be glad to trade videos/issues for anything I can use in future editions...Finally, special thanks go out to Japanese reader Hiroyasu Funazumi, who sent me a lengthy list of corrections from my previous two issues, mostly concerning the Japanese translation of names and titles. Yes, I should've double checked my facts, because it seems that (despite earning my respect for bringing rare-as-hell titles to the States), VSOM's subtitling department still has much to learn when they're translating proper names.

Now that all the official info is out of the way, it's time for my usual bitching about the sad state of American sleaze cinema. It's an instinct which comes quite naturally after looking at this past year in schlock entertainment (not to mention, the onslaught of tumor-inducing crap to come) and realizing that video has extinguished any creativity within exploitation cinema. Years ago, a filmmaker actually had to sweat in order to get his movie made and distributed, and even if I dis' some Al Adamson fiasco, he still earns my ultimate respect for getting his horrible li'l pics made against all odds. Today, with the deluge of video, any hack can slap together an embellished home video, and as long as they have a sliver of marquee value (which explains why Andrew Stevens is still around) or an ample supply of augmented breasts, it's going to wind up in video stores across the country (not to mention, watched and ridiculed by hundreds of unlucky renters). That's why, whenever I get burnt out on current-day slop, I always fall back on the good ol' days of the '60s and '70s. Because love 'em or hate 'em, these guys had to work for a buck (well, maybe not Larry Buchanan).

Speaking of slop, I'm just beginning to stick my toe into the waters of the Internet, and I've never encountered more dumb-as-roadkill creations (who inexplicably, have enough cash to buy a computer and modem). First off, let me announce that there's loads of cool shit on the Internet—so all you hardcore Web-sters can chill out—just so long as you don't buy into the hype that it'll suddenly put the world at your fingertips. It just means there's even more half-witted muck to shovel through in order to find the real gems. As for myself, I first logged on expecting a wellspring of hilarious, obsessive personality disorders, but only found mono-syllabic clods who sound like slow, in-bred cousins of Beavis 'n' Butt-head (i.e. "Drew Barrymore shure *(sic)* is great!" "Yeah, she's hot." "Ditto."). In other words, the Wide World of the Internet has simply given every idiot (with a few bucks) a way to voice their pea-brained opinion, even if they haven't had an active braincell since the Nixon years. It's no surprise, since we now have an entire generation who depends on MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATRE 3000 in order to appreciate a crappy movie. Despite the occasional clever quip, this show is the Anti-Christ for true schlock-addicts, since it has taken the age-old, interactive activity of [continued on Page 41]

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

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Artwork: Anna Puchalski

All opinions, reviews, typos, and drunken rants by Steve Puchalski, unless otherwise noted.

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The deadline for advertising in SC#9 is August 1st, 1996. Ad rates are:

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All ads must be copy-ready and for more information, feel free to write me at either of the above addresses (paper or electronic—it's your call, tough guy).

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FILM FLOTSAM

Trister Keane; New York, N.Y.

DEMON LOVER DIARY (1980). I've only seen this caustic (and often hilarious) documentary once, a dozen years ago, at a one-day-only screening on a double bill with the workmanlike DOCUMENT OF THE DEAD. Will somebody please release this on video, so that everyone I've told about it will finally believe the damned thing exists? When Jeff Kreines was hired to photograph a 14-day, poverty-row horror pic called THE DEMON LOVER, his girlfriend Joel DeMott decided to lug her own camera along, to cover the shoot. But when it all turns sour, this crude li'l pic becomes the ROGER & ME of poverty-row exploitation. Michigan factory-workers-turned-cut-rate-movie-moguls Don Jackson and Jerry Younkens are nerdy amateurs, much of the budget was provided by insurance money scammed from an intentional on-the-job injury, and at the end, Jeff & Joel are literally chased out of the state, fearing for their lives. Beg, borrow or steal to see this scathing portrait of the underbelly of schlock moviemaking.

THE MOST TERRIBLE TIME IN MY LIFE

[Waga Jinsei Saiku No Toki] (1994). This Japanese/Taiwanese production is an ultra-cool homage/send-up of America's hard-boiled detective movies. Masatoshi Nagase stars as Maiku Hama (wink wink) a Yokohama private dick whose office is located inside a theatre's projection booth. But though he looks cool as hell, this guy is a certifiable washout in his career choice, getting repeatedly shot, beaten and trapped in the middle of mob rivalries when he takes on the seemingly simple case of tracking down a Thai waiter's missing brother. This movie works on every level—with taut action, grisly humor and gorgeous b&w, widescreen photography. The first of a proposed trilogy (although I'm still hoping this first pic gets an honest-to-goodness release in America someday, instead of only hitting the festival circuit).

DIONYSUS IN '69 (1970). In the mood for overwhelming, counterculture pretentiousness? Look no further, fellow masochists, because here's a b&w, filmed stageshow, direct from a performance garage in the Village. This time around it's a modern update of Euripides' "The Bacchae" (a long-running, underground hit at the time, thanks to loads of nudity), with Dionysus inviting the audience to help participate in the lewd bacchanal. What makes this tedious, then-X-rated slop worth a giggle is the fact that it was co-directed by a young, post-GREETINGS Brian DePalma (at least that explains the split-screen sequences), with assistance

from Bruce Joel Rubin, who would later stink up theatres with his script for GHOST. The star of this nonsense is William Finley, who would soon achieve cult stature (in other words, high nerd-recognition, but an empty wallet) in the title role of THE PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE. The type of pic that makes you wish you could go back in time and meet these far-out filmmakers—so you can club 'em over the head like baby seals.

THE HOURGLASS SANATORIUM [a.k.a. The Sandglass] [Sanatorium Pod Klepsydra] (1973). In the previous SHOCK, Wojciech Has's THE SARGOSSA MANUSCRIPT was reviewed. But can anybody find a copy of this later work of his? It played the Cannes Film Festival, but did it get any type of American release? This Polish period piece features a young man on a train ride to visit a sanatorium

where his dying dad is residing. There he has hallucinations aplenty, including soldiers, old flames and his parents, with Has' typically elliptical style overwhelming the (at first glance) simple story. More unsung arthouse weirdness from the Eastern Bloc.

IGUANA (1988). I'll sit through anything director Monte Hellman tosses to the public. And although long past his glory days of TWO LANE BLACKTOP and COCK-FIGHTER, it's good to see the guy still working on relatively eccentric fare—even if it barely gets a U.S. release. Everett McGill (TWIN PEAKS) stars as a disfigured, asshole sailor who winds up on a deserted island and proclaims himself its king. All newcomers soon become his prisoners, while the lone female gets the privilege of being repeatedly, graphically raped by Mr. Ugly. Weird 'n' brutal enough to keep you amused (if not exactly transfixed), this international mess (a Swiss production, by an American director, filmed in English and Spanish) also features Fabio Testi and Michael Madsen.

WARREN OATES: ACROSS THE BORDER (1992). First off, does anybody know if this hour-long documentary is available on video? There's no question that Oates was one of the greatest, grimmest actors of our day (no, you idiots, not because of STRIPES...), and although director Tom Thurman only grazes the surface of his long, underrated career, it's still a solid tribute to an individual whose unique brand of cocky loser (in everything from Peckinpah's THE WILD BUNCH to Malick's BADLANDS) is only now being recognized. Narrated by Ned Beatty, and featuring interviews from equally-fringe friends and filmmakers such as Peter Fonda, Stacy Keach, Tom McGuane, and Monte Hellman.

A Celebration of
Feeling, Loving,
Wanting, Killing,
Hearing, Tasting,
Touching, Living.



Dionysus in '69

UNDERGROUND U.S.A. (1980). This indie feature from director Eric Mitchell got a cult rep after a lengthy stint of midnight shows in the Village, and nowadays, is almost impossible to locate. The plot is a gutter-version of *SUNSET BOULEVARD*, with a male Hustler (somnambulistic Mitchell) hanging with a washed up, Edie-esque starlet (Patti Astor) on a path toward suicide. Like Warhol's work, this knock-off doesn't have much plot and takes itself too seriously—in other words, it's a prime example of Punk Noir Cinema and good for lotsa pretentious laughs nowadays. Comes complete with a roster of Lower East Side mini-celebs like Jackie Curtis, Cookie Mueller, Taylor Mead, and John Lurie; good photography by Tom DiCillo (director of *LIVING IN OBLIVION*); and sound by Jim Jarmusch.



Marc Gayan; McDonald, Ohio.

IT'S SO WONDERFUL TO BE A YOUNG MOTHER...NASTY BABY FLICKS

THE RAPE AFTER (1986). Any movie that opens with a pretty young lady teaching a syphilitic retard how to put sugar cubes in his tea obviously isn't aiming for light entertainment, and light entertainment this ain't...For Asian fans sick of hopping vampires, wacky magicians and twenty-minute, dull-as-shit gunfights, this dark-as-pitch, outrageously tasteless horror flick will be a welcome breath of rotten air. With a labyrinthine plot way too complicated to dissect here involving vengeful ghosts of unborn babies, zombies, abortions, hidden corpses, family secrets, and sundry other yummy ingredients, this flick weaves a black spell that's hard to shake. The director, Ho Meng-Hua, has obviously seen quite a few Fulci movies, because the hyper-edited non-stop action we've all come to expect from HK product is conspicuously absent here; instead, we get oodles of brooding atmosphere, ladled on like a thick, chunky marinara. As far as I'm concerned, the king of Asian horror flicks, heavy on the MSG. **THE IMP [Xiong Bang] (1981).** A down on his luck young man with a pregnant wife lands a security job in a huge, creepy building. Little does he know that the spirit of a long dead urchin lives in the basement and has designs on possessing his wife's unborn baby (not quite sure what the li'l fucker was doing in the basement in the first place,

though; the subtitles tended to drop below the screen whenever an important plot detail was explained!). A truly scary HK flick (yes, you heard me right), with a nail-biting, unbelievably downbeat ending that would have never seen the light of day in America. One question: Why does childbirth scare Asians so badly?

THE UNEARTHING (1995). Although there's nothing obscure about this title (you can find it in just about any store), I feel it hasn't yet gotten the respect it deserves. It's easily one of the most bizarre, perverse indie flicks in years, never for a minute afraid to approach the outer limits of bad taste and then run full-on over the border, naked and screaming. The ultra-sick plot involves a family of Phillipino vampires (called Aswang) who possess thirty-foot tongues and a penchant for sucking the blood from UNBORN infants! Enter a young girl with an unwanted pregnancy, and an offer from the family she can't refuse: Move in with us, have your baby, and we'll pay you well...Hear that dinner bell? Co-directed by two lads fresh out of film school, this has an awkward first ten minutes or so, but stick with it; you won't be sorry.

Greg Walters; Tucson, Arizona.

TURN ON, TUNE IN, DROP OUT (1967). This "serious" documentary consists of a lecture by Dr. Tim Leary on the virtues of LSD, and also shows the effect on people in hilarious trip sequences.

ATTACK OF THE FLYING SAUCERS (1957). This short documentary on UFO's was distributed by the Ormond family. This was one of the few films that they lost money on. Is it really that bad?!

VEIL OF BLOOD [The Devil's Plaything] (1973). Joe Sarno makes a vampire movie!! Yep, and it's a real rare one. Made in Switzerland or Sweden, my sources conflict. Not released in the U.S. until 1978.

SELF-PORTRAIT ON BRAINS (1980). REANIMATOR is usually thought of as being Brian Yuzna's first film, but I believe this is his first. Described as being a sci-fi murder mystery. Has anybody seen this? **WEIRD WEIRDO [la Grand Ceremonial] (1968).** I know nothing about this film, except that it's based on a play by Fernando Arrabal (*VIVA LA MUERTE*), and that he also acts in it. Distributed in England by Anthony Balch, who gave it a great English language title.

PIEGE (1968). Continuing with Senor Arrabal, we come to this movie, which is about s/m, judging from the stills I've seen, starring the man himself and Bulle Ogier. It seems that Ogier must have liked this movie a lot since eight years later she starred in *MAITRESSE*. Directed by Jacques Baratier (*FIRST TIME WITH FEELING*).

NIGHT OF THE FLOWERS [La Notte Dei Fiori] (1971). A Euro-Manson clone with the beautiful Dominique Sanda (*THE CONFORMIST*) and Hiram Keller (*FELLINI SATYRICON*). A pop star and

her fans are up to crazy games at a luxury mansion. Sound familiar?

PSYCHEDELICSEX KICKS and WILD HIPPIE PARTY (1967?). These two short film were shown together and were presented by "Pot Heads Experimental Films". Supposedly showing the more extreme side of hippie life, then again who knows.

TROIKA (1969). Frederic Hobb's first movie (as co-director) is in three parts, with the first two sequences being surrealistic stories, while the last one is a sci-fi tale called Rax, which supposedly features bug creatures and alien blue people. Can this be crazier than *ROSELAND*?

WEED (1972). Alex DeRenzy is best known as the director of about a million pornos, but few have heard of or seen this PG-rated documentary on pot.



Video Search of Miami is involved in an extensive task of adding English subtitles to foreign language films. Now, for the first time, the films of Jess Franco, Jean Rollin, Joe D'Amato, Lamberto Bava (to mention a few) can be seen and appreciated in English! A team of translators are working full-time to bring a potpourri of other-wise unavailable films to our members. Write to Video Search of Miami today!

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Shock Cinema's Four Star Favorites

AMERICAN BOY (1978). We all know Martin Scorsese makes damned good films, but this 55-minute documentary is one of his funniest, least known works. Remember the twitchy gun salesman in TAXI DRIVER? His real name is Steven Prince, and this long-time friend of Marty's is even wackier in his own right. He sorta reminds me a real-life, '70s version of a Steve Buscemi character, and Scorsese simply dumps the guy on a sofa and lets him ramble on about his checkered past, such as working at a gas station outside of Barstow and having to waste a speed freak with a .44 Magnum. It's no surprise his best tales are drug related—like road managing Neil Diamond while strung out on smack, visiting a typical Village shooting gallery, and encountering a fully-grown, domesticated gorilla while stoned out of his gourd. His funniest story even has present-day resonance, because when Prince tells us about giving an O.D.'ing girl an impromptu adrenaline shot, you suddenly realize that his true story was ripped-off *verbatim* in PULP FICTION, right down to the tiniest details. A ragged, but totally compelling portrait.

THE NORTHERNERS [De Noorderlingen] (1992). Set in a half-completed, nearly-deserted Netherlands housing project in 1960, director Alex Van Warmerdam (VOYEUR) mixes David Lynchian dysfunction within a nostalgic, Fellini-esque framework. The result is a deranged soap opera featuring a wealth of oddballs. The mailman (Van Warmerdam) secretly steams open letters, then taunts the townsfolk about their secrets. The butcher is getting squirrely because his strict Catholic wife refuses to screw him. While on the other end of the spectrum, the dour forest ranger thinks sex is a waste of his important time. Then there's the butcher's son, Thomas, who becomes obsessed with a mute Wild Girl living in the nearby woods. Things get even stranger when "missionaries" visit with a caged African tribesman, who Thomas helps escape. It all leads to a finale of infidelity, murder, rape, starvation, sainthood, and few happy endings. Everyone in the community is totally misguided (except possibly Thomas—who's quickly getting that way thanks to his surroundings), and this cold, eccentric tale is beautifully draped with a small town dread that gives you the feeling Van W. understands these surroundings all too well.

THE CURSE OF THE DOLL PEOPLE [Munecos infernales] (1960). This isn't your average, atrociously-dubbed, Mexican horror romp—because despite every technical hindrance, director Benito Alazrahi squeezes genuine chills from his diminutive title stars. Elvira Quintana plays a sexy expert on the occult, who meets a group who've returned from Haiti after stealing a sacred idol and being cursed by a pissed-off witch doctor. Soon these dimwits begin dying from a mysterious supernatural force (of course, it's not so mysterious if you read the damned title). Sure, these Doll People are just midgets in suits, wearing masks resembling their past victims and brandishing huge knives, but it's cool how they can infiltrate homes by posing as their kids' big, ugly toys. Ventriloquist dummies are doubled for the midgets when run over by a car (at least I hope they used a dummy), and we soon learn that the pesky witch doctor is sending the sinister dolls on their nightly missions, while hanging out on a

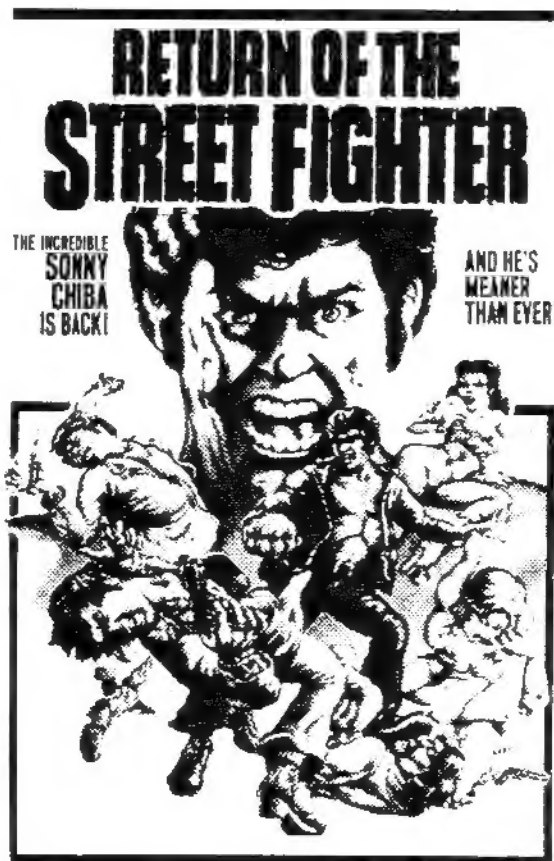
set resembling a discotheque designed by Anton LaVey. Ridiculous? Absolutely! Yet nobody can deny that those dolls are nasty li'l fuckers, out-acting the human cast by a mile and turning this into a Mexploitation must-see.

THE FIRM (1988). No, not the Tom Cruise turd, you morons. This hour-long BBC production from director Alan Clarke (SCUM) is a bleak, disturbing profile of a middle class thug, which takes the ol' Angry Young Man school of U.K. cinema to its most violent, nihilistic limits. Beginning with the strains of Dean Martin's "Amore", we meet Bex, a typical thirtysomething family man who takes his soccer very seriously—even dreaming of pulling together a unified national firm (re: team) to take on the rest of Europe. But since Bex is played by Gary Oldman, you know the guy's got more than one screw loose. Sure enough, Bex and his thick-accented teammates are simply a bunch of modern-day hooligans who use their "football" rivalries as an excuse to rumble with competing teams, bash 'n' burn their cars, and slice each other up, in a tale less about sportsmanship than misguided testosterone. Add some solid drama, a couple moments of caustic bloodshed, and further confirmation that Oldman is one of the best bloody actors on the planet—able to disappear into a role, and unafraid to play a twisted, unlikeable bastard.

THE STREETFIGHTER [Gekitotsu! Satsujinken] (1974) and RETURN OF THE STREETFIGHTER [Satsujinken 2] (1974). After far too long, these Toei grindhouse classics have been legitimately released in their original, gore-drenched, X-rated form (the first was trimmed by almost 15 minutes in order to get an R-rating), showcasing the Neanderthal charms of Japan's answer to Charles Bronson, Shin'ichi "Sonny" Chiba, who set a new standard for

hardcore martial arts mayhem as bone-snapping mercenary Terry Tsurugi. The plots are interchangeable '70s chopsocky, with Chiba running from Mob assassins for various idiotic reasons, but the moment this killing machine gets pissed off and begins slaughtering everyone in camera range, he makes Bruce Lee look like Don Knotts—whether he's ripping the crotch off a rapist, knocking out mouthfuls of teeth, crushing skulls with a single chop, or hitting one guy in the back of the head so hard that his (reecally fake) eyes pop clean out of his skull (my favorite moment in RETURN). Plus you gotta love a movie that has our hero escaping from jail by simply kicking a hole in a concrete wall and running off. Though inelegantly directed by Shigehiro Ozawa, the action scenes are credited to a trio of Martial Arts Instructors who, along with Chiba's intense, throat-ripping antics, elevate this duet to new heights of down 'n' dirty brutality.

THE PRIVATE FILES OF J. EDGAR HOOVER (1977). Anything directed by Larry Cohen is worth a look, but in the wake of Ollie Stone's NIXON, I'd suggest checking out this biopic of the FBI's Top Crap...er, Cop. Not many filmmakers would have the balls to cram Hoover's lengthy career into a Cliff Notes, B-movie framework. Nevertheless, Cohen brings more subversive truth and blind ambition to the screen than any major release would dare. Hoover is portrayed as an obsessive, double-dealing, sexually-neurotic



asshole—hunting down gangsters, commies and subversives, while labeled a “faggot queer” by the press. Told in flashbacks, after J. Edgar’s death (as his flunkies shred secret files), Broderick Crawford plays Hoover with all the subtlety of Orca, while the rest of this historical laff-riot is loaded with familiar faces (and outta work has-beens), including Rip Torn, Michael Parks, Dan Dailey, and blaxploitation fave Raymond St. Jacques (BLACK CAESAR) as Martin Luther King Jr. Years before it became fashionable, Cohen plugged into the low-budget, high-kitsch of a FOX TV-movie potboiler, creating a schlock epic—little action, all talk and AIP’s closest thing to an art film.

HOLLYWOOD'S FIRST UNDERGROUND MOVIE!



An Adult Happening In Psychedelic Color!

THE ACID EATERS (1968). Drug-addled sexploitation doesn't get more lovably idiotic than this colorful, trippy piece of shit (clocking in at a record 62 minutes), in which a bunch of bored 9-to-5'ers exit their dreary jobs, leap on cycles, and hit the rural highways in search of kicks. At first, it's nothing but '60s swill, including topless swims, body painting, catfights, and inane comedy. But this is one of those rare films that refuses to follow any law of narrative cinema, as you'll quickly realize when these Weekend Whoriers discover “the white pyramid,” a 40-foot tower of giant LSD sugar cubes sitting in the middle of nowhere. They climb onto it, strip down, and finally go inside to meet the Devil, who comes complete with ill-fitting, red body-stocking, limp horns and a pitch fork that has a block of ‘acid’ (a big chunk of Styrofoam) stuck on the end, which the leads chew on—and who helps them indulge in their most lurid white-trash fantasies. This amazing, perplexing, T&A (Tits ‘n’ Acid) delight will leave you wondering just how much the filmmakers took before production—not to mention, where can we get some of the same?

CUBAN REBEL GIRLS [a.k.a. Assault of the Rebel Girls] (1959). Before moving onto nude pic notoriety, Barry Mahon directed this pseudo-political tripe, best known as Errol Flynn’s last film. Based on a story by Flynn (scrawled on an empty condom wrapper, no doubt), this rock-bottom tale of Cuba’s “liberation” (which considers Castro a hero for “being on the side of the Little Guy”), has bloated Errol playing himself (and not very well either) in bookending segments. Mainly, it’s an excuse to showcase Flynn’s blonde 17-year-old “protégé,” Beverly Aadland, as a bimbo who gives up her day job at the beauty parlor in order to smuggle arms into Cuba from Key West, stumble about the jungle in heels, and smooch with her rebel leader boyfriend. A better title would’ve been I WAS A TEEN-AGE GUERRILLA, and casting the stultifying Aadland as a Castro rebel is akin to hiring Jennifer Tilly to play a brain surgeon. Barely an hour long, it’s worth a look for the now-hilarious pro-Castro rhetoric, plus the realization that if Fidel’s real-life troops were half as pathetic as this film portrays ‘em, he couldn’t have taken over the Amish, much less all of Batista’s Cuba...On the positive side, if Errol was gonna give his latest piece of ass a starring role in a movie, at least he didn’t flush as much money down the crapper as Renny Harlin did with CUTTHROAT ISLAND.

RUNAWAY NIGHTMARE (1982). I defy anyone to watch this idiocy without going numb from its sheer incompetence, with director/writer/star Michael Cartel proving that he may be a man of many hats, but none of them have a brain underneath. It begins when two Death Valley worm ‘n’ snail farmers are kidnapped by a cult of psychopathic dames, who initially plan on torturing the pair (how? By making ‘em watch the dailies?). Instead, after much witless repartee, the guys are voted into the ragtag gang, and when they’re not being seduced by their not-particularly-attractive captors, help ‘em retrieve some stolen platinum from the Mob. It’s hard to believe that a movie could reach such uncharted depths of boredom, but be sure to remain awake for the hilarious nudity. You see, to hide the fact the lead actresses didn’t strip, the phlegmmakers edited in clips of Body Doubled bare tits. The only problem? The movie was shot on film, while all the nudity is grainy, faded camcorder footage! You have to hand it to Cartel for never attempting to hide the artifice and stupidity—instead, he forces it on the viewer like a dose of the clap. So tremendously wrongheaded that you’d think these folks had never seen an honest to goodness movie before.

MYLENE FARMER: LES VIDEOS (1991). After hearing so much hype about French singer Mylene Farmer, I picked up this Polygram music video compilation (sans subtitles). 48 minutes of Pure Hell later, I realized that this red-headed chick has to be one the most pretentious, least talented performers of the late 20th century. It’s no wonder the snail-eaters adore her, since her videos distill the worst of that country’s cinema and music into one steaming heap of EuroCrap. On its own, her music is unlistenable, long-play dance dreck (I’m sure the fact that Mylene flashes her tits has something to do with her popularity). Even worse, her videos are lousy mini-movies ranging anywhere from 5 to 17 minutes and oozing with maudlin, pseudo-arthouse slop—whether it’s a ventriloquist dummy coming to life, scrawny Farmer fitted with makeshift horns and pitted against a bullfighter, or 18th century armies blowing each other up. Though gorgeously lensed (in widescreen no less), they’re all so preposterously idiotic they make Kate Bush’s escapades look fully-baked. And if there’s any God, director Laurent Boutonnant will move onto a film job more suited to his talents—like videotaping weddings. Get ripped first, prepare to laugh ‘til you shit your pants, and don’t miss it.

COBRA WOMAN (1944). Still unavailable on video, this tropical adventure proves that even a half century ago, Hollywood could crank out bizarre pics, with director Robert Siodmak pumping every frame with color-saturated, South Seas shenanigans. Jon Hall stars as a handsome sailor who, despite warnings (“no drug-soaked brain could dream up the horrors of Cobra Island”), sets sail to rescue his kidnapped fiancée from the clutches of her evil twin sister, Snakeville’s High Priestess (both played by Maria Montez). Unfortunately, nitwit Jon confuses Mean Montez for his betrothed, and winds up on Death Row. Add Sabu as an under-dressed Nature Boy, Lon Chaney Jr. as the isle’s resident thug, and even if Montez can’t act worth beans, this is a plumb role, especially when she appeases the rumbling Volcano God with

her Cobra Boogie, wriggling about in a silver lame evening gown and high heels. It all concludes in a flurry of improbable twists, swashbuckling stupidity, and hardcore campiness—the males are rugged, the native women trowel on the make-up and the backdrops are as fake as Bob Dole’s smile. The ultimate in B-movie silliness, with all the hard hitting realism of an episode of GILLIGAN’S ISLAND.

A LIZARD IN A WOMAN’S SKIN [Una Lucertola Con La Pelle Di Donna] (1971). Lucio Fulci’s movies are an acquired taste, especially his later pics, which not only pushed the envelope for on-screen viscera, but ripped it clean open with a chainsaw. Well, this was one of his earliest psychodramas, shrouded in gore, sex, and so much sledgehammer pretentiousness it feels like your head will explode (can anyone explain the symbolism of being chased by a giant duck?). Florinda Bolkan (De Sica’s A BRIEF VACATION) stars as a woman forced to contend with her sexually-charged, hallucinogenic dreamworld. But



when her horny female neighbor is butchered, just as in Bolkan's nightmare, she questions her own sanity. As the film progresses, the increasingly convoluted police procedural drowns the pic's more surreal aspects, so I'd suggest you forget the story and simply revel in Fulci's auteurist dementia and hysterical camerawork. Let's not ignore Bolkan's fine performance, spectacular (at that time, controversial) FX of flayed dogs courtesy of Carlos Rambaldi, and Ennio Morricone's score. For newcomers, this is also a great measuring stick to see if you've got the guts to explore Fulci's more radical dishes.

THREE THE HARD WAY (1974). If you're a neophyte to the blaxploitation genre, this should be your first stop, courtesy of director Gordon Parks Jr. (*SUPERFLY*). The cast alone is worth the price of a rental, with Jim Brown, Fred Williamson and Jim Kelly combining their brass-balled talents for a Deuce wet dream. In the grindhouse's heyday, putting these three together was like tossing DeNiro, Pacino and Nicholson into one movie (though non-believers will more likely compare it to uniting Wings Hauser, Jeff Speakman and Don "The Dragon" Wilson). The titanic trio stars as three buds who uncover a plot to dose the water systems of Detroit, Washington and L.A. with a chemical which will kill all the Blacks, leading to Neo-Nazis, funky fashions, and comic book-style action (stunts courtesy of Hal Needham—need I say more?) capped off by an assault on Nazi Central's stormtroopers (who look as vicious as Shriners). The plot reeks of 007-style silliness, and despite a lack of hardcore violence, it's wild to watch the leads trying to out-baddass each other (when I first saw this in a theatre, I was surprised the crowd didn't explode from Macho Overload).

ISLAND OF THE DAMNED [Quien Puedo Matar a un Niño?] [a.k.a. Would You Kill a Child?] (1975). This Spanish horror film has a great concept and the backbone to pull it off. Two married English tourists motorboat to a small, isolated island, finding all the shops and homes deserted, with only the children remaining. But instead of hightailing it back to mainland, the pair investigates—because (unlike the viewer) they don't realize that the rugrats in the fishing village have inexplicably slaughtered all the adults. A few survivors of the massacre are in hiding, but they don't last long, with our duo soon alone against the horde of Killer Children. There are hints that their behavior is a reaction to mankind's abuse to children, but overall, it seems more like a plague of homicidal tendencies—especially when our heroine's unborn fetus begins to rebel from inside the womb. Though saddled with a little too much discussion about one's inability to kill a child (I guess they've never seen the Olson Twins from *FULL HOUSE*), director Narciso Ibanez Serrador pulls off some lovely bits of pre-pubescent savagery (i.e. the happy tykes playing games with the corpses) and emerges with an eerie delight.

9 LIVES OF A WET PUSSY (1977). What's a generic '70s porno flick doing here? Cause I love uncovering celebs in their early career potholes. This time around, it's *BAD LIEUTENANT*-director Abel Ferrara, who actually stars in one of the sex scenes. Produced by Navaron Films (also responsible for *MS. 45*), an opium-stoned hostess introduces several sexual vignettes, and though slightly classier than the usual cum pageants, it's impossible to achieve a Lady Chatterley-like decadence when you're saddled with an Al Adamson-like cast. But wait. Because halfway in, we get a 10 minute flashback featuring a Christian "Old Man" and his two virgin daughters who are so horny that a Bible quote gives 'em the idea to get Pop drunk and then fuck him while he's passed out. Sure enough, that's Abel himself under the cheap white wig (credited under the moniker Jimmy Laine, which he also used in *DRILLER KILLER*), being raped in his sleep by his comely (emphasis on the *come*) offspring. It's all rather pathetic, with the distinct possibility Abel had a Dick Double for the scene, since director Jimmy Boy L. (another Abel nom de plume?) never gives you a long shot of nekkid Ferrara. Nevertheless, a must-see embarrassment!

TOKYO DRIFTER [Tokyo Nagaremono] (1966). After cranking out 40 movies in only a dozen years for Nikkatsu (the Japanese equivalent of AIP), including *BRANDED TO KILL* and *GATE OF FLESH*, director Suzuki Seijun is finally getting the recognition he deserves. This is his tastiest, most excessive treat. A garish blast of widescreen color and style—and like no other gangster film you've ever seen, featuring Tetsuya Watari as Tetsu, an expert hitman. While aiding his old boss, Tetsu has to hit the road, from the snowy countryside to the "Saloon Western", while continually warbling his melancholy Tokyo Drifter Theme Song and earning his reputation for a "charmed life" by avoiding assassins at every turn. It's the typical convoluted Yakuza story, laced with honor and manipulation, but Seijun pares away all the unnecessary bullshit (leaving it a lean 80 minutes), while adrenilizing the flick with hyper-stylized costumes (Tetsu's powder blue suit), sets (a blindingly yellow nightclub) and photography—not to mention, a cool level of self-parody and glorious bursts of violence that instantly earn him the title, God of Arthouse Carnage.

JOHN LURIE AND THE LOUNGE LIZARDS: LIVE IN BERLIN 1991. I first saw the Lounge Lizards in concert about a dozen years ago, right after John Lurie's lead in *STRANGER THAN PARADISE* (since it was Syracuse, the

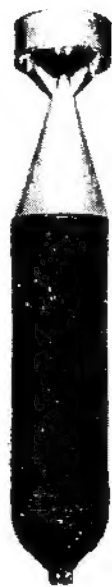
musical sinkhole of the nation, only a dozen people showed up to see 'em). The group has substantially mutated over the years, but they're better than ever, as this pic demonstrates. 101 solid minutes of kick-the-door-in modern jazz, without any unnecessary interviews, narcissism or fan idolatry to get in the way of the music. It's a joy to watch their musical chops up close (although director Garret Linn should've eliminated the nausea-inducing camerawork), with Lurie leading his nine-piece ensemble on soprano and alto saxes. Standouts include Bryan Carrott's vibes and Jane Scarpantoni's scene-stealing cello, while the epic length "Mr. Stinky's Blues" gives Lurie the chance to introduce 'em all and let 'em rip loose on a brief solo. Sadly, the film was barely released, reinforcing the half-witted studio rationale that you should only make concert movies about overhyped, flash-in-the-pans.

THE BED SITTING ROOM (1969). This post-apocalyptic comedy nearly killed director Richard Lester's career, despite starring some of England's greatest comics. Moviegoers stayed away by the millions, then the studio's baffling ad campaign only kicked it while it was down. Nonetheless, it's one of the most gorgeously insane movies ever created (imagine a Samuel Beckett adaptation of *THE ROAD WARRIOR*). Based on a

play by Spike Milligan and John Antrobus, this is a warped view of England-as-post-war-wasteland, yet in typically unflappable British fashion, the handful of survivors stumble through the rubble, ignoring the fact that their world has gone down the shitter. Peter Cook & Dudley Moore patrol the area in a weather balloon, Rita Tushingham is 18-months pregnant, Marty Feldman is a nurse who aids in the delivery, and Ralph Richardson seems to be mutating into a Bed Sitting Room. This absurdist epic also contains many of most striking images of the future I've ever witnessed—from mountains of old shoes to Rube Goldberg-style inventions—making for a remarkable achievement in texture, as well as required viewing for fans of truly surreal humor.

REPTILICUS (1962). If Tokyo can become world famous as a Giant Monster Stomping Ground, why can't Copenhagen? At least that's what these Danish filmmakers hoped, never realizing that their jaw-droppingly inept effects would propel this otherwise bland pic to the highest echelons of Drive-in Stupidity. When oil workers excavate the remains of a prehistoric reptile's tail, the harmless (yeah, right) frozen relic is trucked to a lab, where a nitwit technician lets the tail defrost and the hibernating cells regenerate into the one-hundred-foot-long Reptilicus. The beginning is weighted down by talky human boneheads, but the unintentional laughs are non-stop once the creature busts loose. Because after all this build-up, all we get is a plastic puppet hanging limp from wires, smashing cheap doll houses in slo-mo, and

WE'VE GOT A BOMB* ON OUR HANDS



In all fairness, we give warning that TOMORROW we're dropping Richard Lester's new film "THE BED SITTING ROOM" on the Little Carnegie

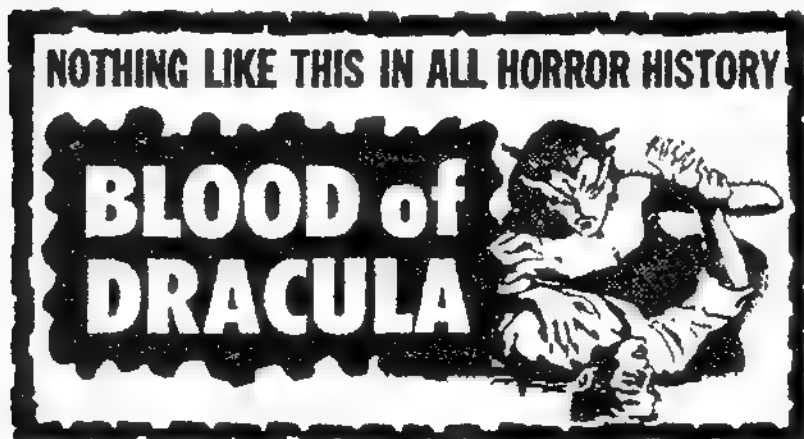
It's got to be the bomb* of the year.

* BOMB—a motion picture so brilliantly funny it goes over most people's heads.

"THE BED SITTING ROOM"

splitting green fire (painted directly onto the film stock) Nevertheless, Ridiculous, er, Reptilicus acts with more conviction than the cast of no names, as it bobbles through a stock footage-filled path of destruction Sure to hold a pathetic place in the hearts of Bad Film aficionados for decades to come

Cassavetes in the lead—who's not only more believable as a snide biker leader, but is one hell of a better actor (even though he never actually rides his own chopper) Cassavetes plays Cody, the president of The Skulls, who gets sick of being hassled by The Man and decides to find their own personal paradise But first, these dirtballs steal some brews, invade a county fair, share their "brain-bending" marijuana with a lovely local, and leave the pea-brained hicks shitting their shorts. Of course, when these bumpkins form a vigilante committee to deal with The Skulls, it only leaves 'em stomped into the dirt during the raucous finale. Scriptor Charles Griffith (A BUCKET OF BLOOD) livens up the story with hilarious slang and wall-to-wall scuzziness, giving viewers a cool trip back to a time when the youth of America dreamed of rebelling against the world—instead of owning it.



BLOOD OF DRACULA (1957). Drive-in era kitsch doesn't get much better than this AIP vampire pic, featuring one of the sexiest, goofiest girl ghouls ever to appear on cheap celluloid Sandra Harrison stars as a teen in turmoil, whose newly-widowed dad remarries a painted-up hussy and promptly dumps Sandra into an all-girl boarding school where she's treated like yesterday's Catch of the Day Meanwhile, the chemistry prof recruits her as a guinea pig to discover the Real Power within the human soul Using a cheesy plastic Carpathian amulet, the prof puts Sandra in a trance, and soon afterward, the campus gals begin to get sucked dry by a mysterious fiend (since the word "Dracula" is in the title, it doesn't take Stephen Hawking to figure out a vampire's to blame) Director Herbert L. Strock (I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN) relies on Troubled Teen clichés during the first half, but when Sandra gets her monster make-over, she's enough to make an East Village Goth Queen wet her pants with envy—what with her Eddie Munster widow's peak, crazy eyebrows and mouthful of over sized fangs. And when she's noisily sucking on a victim, it sounds more like she's coughing up a hairball One of the most memorably wicked femme fatales of the '50s.

THE REFLECTING SKIN (1990). Without question, this is the sickest studio release since BLUE VELVET A film utterly barren of hope, which offers us childhood at its most fucked up and foul. Yes, that's my kinda movie, folks! On the surface, it looks like a sweet little rural tale about a boy, complete with lush heartland locales. But director Philip Ridley is one grim bastard, exposing the insanity and death lingering just under the surface of adolescent life. It's no surprise young Seth is unstable—his Mom is certifiably nuts, Dad douses himself with gasoline and torches up, and an ominous carload of greasers cruises the backroads, kidnapping boys and leaving their corpses stashed about town Believe it or not, when his older brother Cameron (Viggo Mortenson) returns home from a tour of duty in the Pacific, things get even worse, with Seth convinced that his female neighbor is a vampire, while stashing a mummified baby under his bed, believing it's an angel A movie so ghoulish and uncompromising that you can ignore its more pretentious moments. This one sticks with you long afterward

DEVIL'S ANGELS (1967). After the financial success of THE WILD ANGELS, AIP cranked out this follow-up in record time, giving slobbering biker addicts more beer-swilling adventures of a pack of cycle-riding misfits This time, instead of prettyboy Peter Fonda, we get brooding, arthouse-director-in-training John

ANGEL DUST [Tenshi No Kuzu] (1994). Further proof that Sogo Ishii (THE CRAZY FAMILY) is one of Japan's most dynamic directors, this time toning down his hyper-kinetic style for a serial killer yarn. Every Monday at exactly 6 p.m., during the height of rush hour, a young woman is killed by a poisoned hypo. Since the police are baffled by this seemingly random crime, enter Kaho Minami as a criminal psychologist who hopes to weasel her way into the killer's mindset. Unfortunately, she also encounters an old college beau (Takeshi Wakamatsu), who runs a controversial deprogramming clinic for brain-fried religious cult victims and sucks her back into their old, destructive relationship Of course, there's also the suspicion that this wacko knows more about the murders than he's admitting. Though heavy on the psycho-babble and sidestepping the story's more graphic details, the film's success lies in its bizarre plot twists, dynamic sequences and an undeniable creepiness that leaves the viewer as confused as any of the leads. Not to mention, a knack for tapping into the destructive possibilities of humankind.

HOMEODIES (1974). There's nothing I hate more in movies than cute, irascible old curmudgeons (every time I see a Jessica Tandy/Hume Cronyn film I want to stuff the brittle ol' pair into a trash compactor) But director Larry Yust (TRICK BABY) goes against all expectations with this gruesome romp, featuring an apartment building of senior citizens who're being tossed out onto their wrinkly asses in the wake of urban renewal. But when an entire elevator full of construction workers is "accidentally" crushed flatter than a sardine tin, you realize these old farts aren't your typical Nursing Home candidates, as they go on a homicidal quest to keep their homes. Thankfully

it never gets cutesy and vomitable (ala BATTER-IES NOT INCLUDED), and one of its most terrifying scenes involves a visit to an old age condo that has all the warmth of a morgue Add a little black comedy (a chunk of human foot provides an amusing sight gag), gutsy performances and realistic Cincinnati locales, and the result is a creepy, no-budget winner, swaddled in cruelty and anti-social laughs

GET CARTER (1971) Still unreleased on video in the U.S., this terrific British crime pic stars Michael Caine (long before becoming a Hollywood whore) as Jack Carter, a ruthless hood who heads to Newcastle to avenge his brother's unsolved murder In the process, he gets his Cockney ass chased about the city by all the local scum, uncovers why his kin was murdered, then seeks retribution—equipped with a bottle of whiskey and a double barreled shotgun. Don't let the hoary concept fool you though, because this is a stark, no-nonsense tale of vengeance, with director Mike Hodges wringing the most out of his seedy working class locales Tough talking crooks, cute birds, a wicked sense of humor, and at the center, Caine expertly playing a heartless charmer who's pissed off from first frame to last (and seems to enjoy killing double-dealing assholes). In the light of today's avalanche of posour crime flicks, this is the real thing. Remade the next year, complete with continent and color change, as HIT MAN [SC#5], with Bernie Casey and Pam Grier.



FILM REVIEWS

THE SWINGER (1966). If the hyper-stylized credits don't get your head spinning, I don't know what will—with Ann-Margret, everybody's favorite Sex Kitten, squeezed into a black leotard, bouncing on trampolines, go-go dancing in black high heels, and singing the theme song. Now, if only the entire film kept up that pace. Because although boasting of a racy storyline (it's not), the filmmakers prefer to fall back on watered-down, sitcom situations. It's no surprise, since director George Sidney is best known for the type of musical pabulum that Leonard Maltin masturbates over, like *ANCHORS AWEIGH*. The casting starts off solid enough, with Ann Margret, who was red

hot at the time, with pics like *VIVA LAS VEGAS* under her garter belt. On the other hand, co-star Tony Franciosa is a total stiff who's ready-made for a brief-but-dull TV career. The leaden plot has Tony playing Ric Colby, the Hugh Hefner-esque editor of *Girl Lure* magazine, who wants Ann-M to pose for a pictorial—an offer this Good Girl counters with "I'm not a nudie. I'm a wnter!" Insulted by Tony's sexism, she churns out her own sleazy novel and becomes the diva of the '60s softcore literati with her fake-bio, "The Swinger: Saga of a Depraved Young Lady". All the while, she lives with a pack of nice Beatniks (once again, Tinseltown homogenizes the counterculture into a runny paste) and pretends to be a bohemian nympho. Unfortunately, despite her spread-legged facade, Ann-M always remains a "sweet young thing", and the sappiness continues when Tony does a Pygmalion on her and she falls for the guy. On the plus side, Ann-M is drop-dead gorgeous throughout, and the shots of her sprawled in bed, wearing an orange bikini top and dress slit up to her hip help take your mind off the rest of this insipid sex-comedy. Another highlight is when she's used like a human paintbrush on a horizontal canvas—bikini-clad, soaked in multi-colored paints and twisted about like a Spin-Art. With her sultry allure, Ann-M deserved a better showcase than this corny drivel, and whenever she's off-screen it becomes just another case of a studio thinking they're cutting-edge, but instead, only looking like a bunch of old farts who haven't gotten laid in a loooong time. Phooey!

DAISIES [Sedmikrasky] (1966). Whether you're got a taste for early, experimental Czech cinema or not, this amazing pic belongs at the top of your Must See List. Because instead of the usual dreary political rhetoric and actors who look like they were pulled out of a

sweatshop, this Eastern Bloc film has a sense of humor and stars a pair of rebellious teenaged babes! Though barely remembered outside of college film courses, director Vera Chytilova helmed over two dozen features since the '60s, and *DAISIES* is one of the few to get a respectable U.S. release. While the plot is deceptively simple, the style is anything but. Two young Czechs, both named Mane, come to the conclusion that since everything in their world is "spoiled", they too should become spoiled. So this brunette (Jitka Cerhova) and blonde (Ivana Karbandova) get decked out in their best dresses and hit the road for 75 minutes worth of disjointed, hedonistic

adventures. Vignettes include scamming fancy dinners from a veritable parade of old farts, disrupting a prissy nightclub by climbing over tables and stealing drinks, setting fires in their bachelorette pad, and even when Blonde Marie tries to commit suicide by gas, it turns into a joke because she forgets to shut her windows. Essentially, these girls just wanna have fun, and the film is so disarmingly childish that the two teases (who, in any other case, would seem like self-serving li'l bitches) are thoroughly winning. Meanwhile, the film is loaded with never-subtle double entendres, such as when the gals indulge in a phallic snack of pickles, sausages

and bananas—blithely slicing them up with scissors. In one fantasy sequence, they even begin chopping off each other's body parts, giggling, even as disembodied heads float about the room. This playful destruction culminates when they invade a posh dinner party set-up (via the dumbwaiter), chug the liquor, paw at the food, and toss deserts à la Mack Sennett. In addition to incorporating stock footage, distorted lenses and bizarre dance numbers, the film continually flips between b&w and color—shifting from silent film homages, to surreal, color-coordinated backdrops and costumes. 30 years after its initial release, *DAISIES* still seems just as weird and fresh today making for avant garde cinema at its most accessible.

VOYAGE OF THE ROCK ALIENS (1984). In my perpetual search for the ultimate in celluloid crapola, how could I pass this up? Imagine a cross between *STAR WARS*, *HAPPY DAYS* and *XANADU*, and you get this musical sci-fiasco starring Pia Zadora. Truly, we have found ourselves in Cinema Hell! It's not even lousy enough to keep you awake with its wretched charms—although the opening dance video with Pia and Jermaine Jackson (*MAD MAX* crossed with *BREAKIN*



2: **ELECTRIC BOOGALOO**) might keep you running to the toilet with uncontrollable diarrhea. A spaceship (shaped like an electric guitar?) is in search of rock 'n' roll music and arrive at the quaint town of Speelburgh (groan), populated by '50s rockabilly asswipes. In homage to Annette Funicello's **BEACH PARTY** movies, Pia plays a character named Dee Dee, who dreams of being a singer, if only she could convince her leather-boy beau (badly-permed Craig Sheffer). The rest of this tripe has the techno-pop aliens playing at Heidi High's school dance, Ruth Gordon as the UFO-obsessed shenff, Michael Berryman typecast as an escaped mental patient; Sheffer lip-synching, complete with Solid Gold Dancer wannabees; while musically-challenged Pia gets her big break to sing (and the viewers' big break to Fast Forward). Stuffed into leather pants, it takes more than a skintight wardrobe to make Pia a sex symbol—it'd take a fucking miracle! As it is, she looks like Olivia Newton-John after being put through a trash compactor. It'd be nice to report that Pia had a sense of humor about all of this, but after gnmacing through Pia's live stagemash a couple years back (I had FREE tickets, OK?), complete with a gaggle of tired Broadway show tunes and her talent-barren brat, I'm convinced the poor deluded woman believes she's got a shred of talent. But the Career Nosedive Award has to go to director James Fargo, who started working with Clint Eastwood (**THE ENFORCER**), moved down the food chain to Chuck Norris (**FORCED VENGEANCE**), and ended up lensing a Pia Zadora vanity project! I wouldn't have been surprised if, in the midst of production, the guy was found with his head in the oven. Bring this video home to a bunch of drunk friends and you might end up the same way.

THE CANDY SNATCHERS (1973).

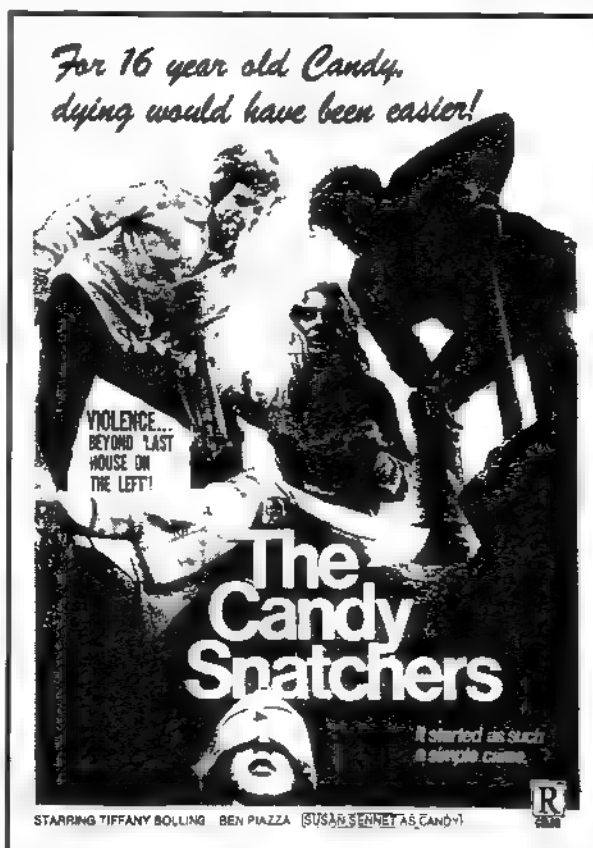
I'd heard rumors about this '70s sicko-fest for years, and after snagging a copy, I can understand its rep. First off, director Guerdon Trueblood doesn't waste any time getting down 'n' dirty. Susan Sennet stars as Candy Philips, a nubile young teen who's hitchhiking home in her schoolgirl miniskirt, when she's pulled into a van and kidnapped by a trio of sickos—two guys and a gal (Tiffany Bolling, best known for serving time in drive-in fare like **THE CENTERFOLD GIRLS** and **BONNIE'S KIDS**). Then they drive into the hills, where Candy is bound, gagged, blindfolded, and buried alive in a makeshift coffin, with the crooks ransoming her in exchange for the contents of Pop's diamond store. What the slimebags don't realize is that Candy's dad is more than happy to let his daughter (not to mention, his alcoholic wife) rot, because he's more interested in running off to Rio with his young mistress. The plot gets more complex when the only witness to the crime is a mute l'il boy (looking like a slow Dennis the Menace) who tries to tell the adults, but only gets slapped about for his effort. In fact, the rugrat's parents are almost as bad as the kidnappers, especially his white trash shrew of a mom, who threatens to give her son a bottle of downers. Meanwhile, Sennet spends most of the pic pleading not to be put back in "the Hole", threatened with having her ear sliced off, and finally getting her cherry popped by one of her abductors. It's pretty grim shit, laced with tidbits that'll have Normals squirming (like a trip to a blackmarket hospital to buy an ear). Plus,

these folks are so cruel that Bolling even gets raped by one of her own crew! Co-starring James Whitworth (**THE HILLS HAVE EYES**) as a burly telephone repairman, this crud-packed classic digs deeps into the darkest recesses of schlock cinema, complete with the unmistakable stench of misogyny that brands *real* '70s rotgut. It's even capped off with a perfect, no-hope-whatsoever finale that'll leave grindhouse vets misty-eyed with nostalgia.

ARRIVEDERCI, LUCIO: Before diving into the following review of Fulci's **THE SMUGGLER**, it's with great sadness I pass on the news that Lucio Fulci passed away on March 13, 1996 from an apparent heart attack at the age of 68. It was one of my great pleasures of this year to sit in a hotel bar, stranded in the middle of a blizzard, and share a table with the Great Man. His cinematic legacy has only begun to be fully appreciated, and he will be greatly missed by all horror and Eurotrash fanatics.

THE SMUGGLER [a.k.a. Contraband] [Luca Il Contrabbandiere] (1980). The late, great Lucio Fulci is best known for his cinematic onslaught of pastaland gut-crunchers, such as **THE BEYOND** and **ZOMBIE**. But hardcore fans know the guy directed everything from westerns, to family fare (would you believe, **RETURN TO WHITE FANG?**), to this action/gangster flick. Fabio Testi stars as Luca, the leader of a pack of professional smugglers, who has to decide whether to stick with his missus (who doesn't approve of his dicey

career), or continue his daily routine of running from the police. Of course, following sub-standard Euro-slop tradition, a rival gangster named Giorino is after Luca's territory. Don't let the first half hour fool you though, because when Luca's older brother (and partner in crime) is machine-gunned by Giorino's henchmen (disguised as cops), the movie becomes a vision of balls-out revenge. It says a lot about Fulci's directorial savvy (and infatuation with lingering on mutilated corpses) that he can turn a simple gangland rub-out into a full-scale, hardcore field day which brings his zombie-style gore to a different (but no less effective) context. While other directors would cut away, Fulci's forte was lingering on the most extreme moment of bloodshed (additional proof of why he was the God of Unrepentant Gore). Along the way, a neck is blown open; the back of a guy's head is blasted clean off; a supporting cretin is tossed into a sulfur bath (with his lumpy corpse later chucked through his boss' bedroom window); and in the most lingering sequence, half of a woman's face is graphically burnt away using a lab's Bunsen burner. You can



almost smell the roasted flesh! Yeah! Even when Luca isn't tracking down his brother's killers, the other Naples Crime Lords are being slaughtered by the new Drug Kingpin in town. But things get *personal* when Luca's wife is brutally sodomized (lovingly on-camera, just in case all you sickfucks were curious), leading to a conclusion so perfect I don't dare give it away. Loaded with hot-headed crooks, ugly early-'80s fashions (check out those Euro-discos!) and unrepentant gore, this pic may be far from another **GODFATHER**, but Fulci's lovingly-lensed brutality transforms it into a lower-case masterwork of visceral crime 'n' grime.

GIRL FROM TOBACCO ROW (1966). June and Ron Ormond were certainly a pair, and even though they barely knew what end of the camera to look through, Dixie drive-ins were littered with their Z-grade, Southern trash, like **THE EXOTIC ONES** [SC#3] and **THE GRIM REAPER** [SC#7]. One of their most asinine is this sanctimonious, in-bred jamboree, featuring "America's Newest Action Star", Earl 'Snake' Richards. It begins with a chain gang escape, when Snake flees to a small town that makes Dogpatch look like Harvard. And although the population is supposed to be prime examples of home-spun Americana, from my view, they looked more like compost-headed, cousin-fuckin' rejects from HEE HAW. Snake gets a place to crash when he becomes a "buddy" to some kid in the woods, who takes

him home to meet his Preacher Dad (country-western ol' fart Tex Ritter—playing a fat-fuck Reverend who quotes the Bible 'til you wanna kick all his teeth down his throat). Even though the kid's sis is dating a local cop, this sexpot-in-waiting gets the hots for our wayward greaser and decides to seduce him. Unfortunately (for any viewers expecting a little fun), under that ducktail Snake is a nice guy, turned bad by an alcoholic dad and a dead mom. Of course, The Mob is also following Snake in hopes of retrieving "100 thousand clams", which the jailbird knows the location of (oddly enough, none of the townsfolk notice that these shark-skin-suited wiseguys don't fit in 'round these parts). Most importantly, don't expect a pneumatic Russ Meyer-style skin-flick, because this turns out to be such an innocuous li'l melodrama I could be mistaken for a Disney flick. Instead, all we get is wall-to-wall, Bible-thumpin' bathos, padded to the sprocket holes with local musicians and singers that'll have your eyes hemorrhaging. Then it culminates at a Tobacco Festival that'll make you want to open a vein (preferably, the director's), while making you long for comparatively sleazier fare, like **PETTICOAT JUNCTION**. Still, if you're a masochistic, backwoods completist (naturally, with a fresh batch of corn mash beside you), this holier-than-thou hodgepodge will put on smile on your face.

PRELUDE TO HAPPINESS (1974). This no-budget chunk of jaw-dropping melodrama is a lost masterwork. The quintessential Handicapped Love Story, containing all the cheap pathos of '70s studio bombast like **ICE CASTLES**, but with enough disturbing, schlock-level exploitation to make it unforgettable. It begins like any crude drive-in pic, with a sexy blonde named Susan (Rose Petra) romping about the beach with her loving fiancé. But on the way home, they're involved in a car accident, and when Susan awakens, she's in a hospital bed with one of her legs amputated above the knee. It's only then that we realize Ms. Petra is a *real-life amputee*—and this is (sorta) her true story, told with all the style and grace of a Driver's Ed film. The pathos continues when Susan's true love (who's got Callous Shitbag written all over him) breaks off their wedding, because she's lacking a limb. Then she goes through the usual paces: Anger, depression, denial, depression, acceptance, and even *more* depression ("No man's gonna want me when I'm only half a woman!"). Susan eventually gets a job at the hospital that chopped her leg off, and since the poor girl needs a man in order to feel complete



(remember, this is the '70s), it's helpful that a good-looking neurosurgeon named Doctor Steve (Gary Davis) pays attention ("He doesn't see me as a cripple. He sees me as a woman..."). And after breaking off his engagement with his rich-bitch fiancée, he even saves Susan from getting mugged by local thugs. Though I realize I should've felt horrible about laughing at Rose's biographical pathos, it's difficult not to when the pic is crammed with such stiff, maudlin cheeziness. What keeps it from being a total freak show is that director Robert Pinkerton was obviously trying his damndest to make an uplifting portrait of the handicapped. It's also a showcase for the comely Rosa, with the camera reveling in her legless beauty, even giving her the opportunity to transfix a crowd by playing the guitar (wow, she's

crippled and she can sing! What a woman!). Fueled by as much misguided enthusiasm as any Ed Wood production, the fact that several local doctors were conned into helping finance this apparently-unreleased gem only adds to its charm.

STREET OF NO RETURN [Sans Espoir De Retour] (1989). Want a dose of tough, modern film noir? Look not further than this Sam Fuller offering. It's one of the craggy old genius' best, and considering the stupidity of the U.S. studio system, it's no surprise this Europe-lensed gem was barely released. It kicks off in grand style, dropping the camera into the middle of a street riot, with Keith Carradine as a scraggly-haired wino (in the finest **BARFLY** tradition). But Keith wasn't always such a homeless, badly-coifed wretch, and through extended flashbacks we learn he was once a beloved rock musician simply known as Michael. Back then, the guy wouldn't touch alcohol (it's for "losers"), but instead became addicted to a dancer named Cia (luscious Valentina Vargas, currently on display in **HELLRAISER BLOODLINE**) after getting his wick dipped during a one-night stand—only to get the brush-off from Cia at the last moment, since she's actually a mob boss' mistress. Next thing we know, Michael is as drunk as a Frenchman and has his vocal chords slit by the jealous mobster. So nowadays, he's just another faceless (albeit hoarse) derelict, until he spots his old flame on the street one day. But that's not *nearly* enough story, so let's have Michael unjustly accused of murdering a cop, running into hardboiled police chief Bill Duke, discovering a gang of Black militant drug-dealers, and exacting revenge on the gangster who ventilated his throat. Fuller always works best with extreme material, and he's got it here, while cluttering the plot with marvelous bits of business, such as Duke's high-decibel interrogation of a roomful of gangbangers or Michael's prison escape with the aid of a fire hose. But if you want absurd, check out Carradine's concert scenes as he sings his weak-voiced, soft-rock ballads in a white suit covered in stars and sequins. Or how about his hideous music video, complete with T&A-relief from Vargas, who rides a horse in nothing but a G-string. Keith even wrote the pic's trio of inane tunes ("Love Gone By", "Almost Alive" and "Street of No Return"), with crotchety ol' Fuller contributing to the title song's lyrics. It's a great story (based on a David Goodis thriller), the acting is appropriately over-the-top, while Fuller gives this tour of the abyss a romanticism that few other directors can manage on their best day.

CHASTITY (1969). If (like me) you think that Cher is one of the biggest fucking jokes in showbiz, then this horrible, counterculture crock will definitely slam your lower intestine into overdrive. Yes, just before taking brain-dead America by storm with the inexplicably-long-running **SONNY AND CHER COMEDY HOUR**, Cher had the title role in this heavyhanded, hitchhiker-on-the-road pic, which Sonny Bono wrote and produced (with the barely noticeable contributions of director Alessio de Paola). Although advertised like some cheap thrill ride, all we get is an unreal, uninvolved, unfathomably stupid pic about yesterday's troubled generation. Oh yeah, it's also dull as dogshit. Hard to believe that Cher would name her kid after this rotten flick (maybe that's what caused her to become a lesbian. On the other hand, it was more likely having a dweeb like Sonny around as a male role model). To be honest, the hand-scrawled credits and hippie-graphics had me hoping this would be a kitsch-fest. But I quickly learned to expect the worst, because even though *Chastity* crashes with anonymous drivers ("Do you mind if I get undressed?" he asks. "I don't care if you slit your throat," she counters), she's essentially a good girl whose method of self-discovery involves bumming rides in the middle of the desert and looking for Prince Charming. First off, it's hard enough to buy into the idea that every male within camera range thinks Cher is a sex goddess. Even worse, her long, *long* interior monologues about God, men, insincerity, surviving alone, and assorted hippie-age bullshit is more than any reasonable moviegoer should be forced to tolerate for 98 minutes. Obviously, she was supposed to be exposing the hypocrisy of the times, but instead, *Chastity* just comes off like a pretentious bubblehead. Of course, the pic also saddles her with a secret trauma (take a guess... yep, she was molested by daddy). And in the interest of making the movie as far from reality as possible, *Chastity* enters the stable of a low-class pimp, but manages to avoid having sex, even as she's scamming nerdy virgins outta their dough. Wow! This is terrible! If you're a Cher Hag, this might be a camp classic, but for anyone else, it's pointless drivel that (if that was any justice) should've put an early nail in Cher's acting coffin.

MOONCHILD (1972). For his thesis project at USC, director/writer Alan Gadney grabbed a slew of fellow students and cranked out this amazingly screwy supernatural pic. He even snagged Victor Buono and John Carradine for the project, and oddly enough, it's probably the most interesting work they did during that era. The result is the ultimate no-budget arthouse horror flick, piled high with the type of half-baked style and overwhelming pretentious that it takes hotshot studio directors decades to acquire. Despite its pseudo-intellectual hokey, it also indulges in the same type of creepy inventiveness that the original *PHANTASM* had, right down to the wild editing and photography. And though awash in European ambiance, the whole thing was filmed in the California Mission Inn Hotel. Mark Travis stars as a traveling art student who's lured into a mysterious castle/hotel by "The Watcher" (John Carradine), and there he encounters a barrage of oddballs, including a one-eyed,

hunchbacked "homunculus", hooded figures and a blonde bimbo representing "sins of the flesh". While this "moonchild" roams the place, he has brief (but continual) hallucinations as a trio of symbolic characters vie for his soul. Victor Buono's maitre d' overflows with religious riddles (while stuffing his fat face); Pat Renella's manager tries to entice him into militaristic pursuits; and there's a friendly old alchemist who shows the confused guy the fun of more base desires. To answer your inevitable question: Little of this makes sense. But Gadney gives it all a delirious, trippy veneer and packs it with absurd moments (in particular, Buono is a continual hoot). The film even turns into a full-fledged, costumed Inquisition by the end, with our student on trial for his soul, during which he finally realizes exactly *why* he's stuck here. All of this is sure to bore ordinary schlock fans, what with its dialogue-heavy, action-barren landscape. Nevertheless, I dug it for its brain-frying style alone. Plus, you've gotta respect anyone who, in his first film, cranks out such a philosophical mindfuck in the guise of a simple horror pic. What the hell ever happened to Gadney anyhow?

SONIC OUTLAWS (1995; Available for \$25 ppd. to Craig Baldwin, 992 Valencia St. San Francisco, CA 94110). When it comes to today's experimental filmmakers, Craig Baldwin continues to prove he can do no wrong. His first pair, *TRIBULATION 99* [SC#4] and *O NO CORONADO!* [SC#7] combined a rabid sense of humor with found footage, and this new, feature-length documentary brings his love of cultural recycling to the forefront. It's a brilliant look into the hotly-debated topics of copyright infringement, music sampling and media subversion, all pulled off with Baldwin's usual high-style and deft editing. Much of the film is spend detailing the controversial restraining order against the San Francisco band Negativland and their album "U2", which deconstructed "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For", accompanied by piss-your-pants-hilarious Casey Kasem outtakes. In addition, there's Negativland's hoax to link their music to a quadruple murder—a story every news vulture leapt onto without ever checking the facts. Then, this wild history lesson erupts in a dozen different directions. We get an illegal demonstration of how to pick up private phone calls with the use of a scanner, Mark Pauline and his gut-busting "Billboard Improvements", pirate radio stations, and Emergency Broadcast Network's brain-numbing visuals.

Best of all, the Barbie Liberation Organization performs "corrective surgery" on Barbies and G.I. Joes by switching their voice boxes, then replacing them in the stores. As a whole, the film is probably more fun than persuasive, because if you disagree with the pic's stance, it certainly won't win you over. But for open-minded viewers, this is thought-provoking material featuring smart, literate interviewees (not the usual, addle-pated crackpots) who believe that our modern society's copyright laws are outdated, and "if they put it out there—it's ours to use." Most importantly, this amazing, free-form assault not only analyses the subject at hand, but also becomes a prime example of this type of artistic recycling in the process.

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SHE'S NOT JUST A GIRL,
SHE'S AN EXPERIENCE!

Chastity

LATE SHOW AT
11:30

4 35, 8 15,
9 55, 11 35



"Chastity"

STARRING
CHER

CO-STARING
Barbara
LONDON

Stephen
WHITTAKER

A COLOR



THE LONG ISLAND CANNIBAL MASSACRE (1983). All hail Nathan H. Schiff! Because back in the early '80s, this ballsy director was the first of a new breed of gutter-eye goremeisters, churning out one-take, weekend-lensed swill—from its hand-scrawled credits, to its onslaught of talent-barren non-actors. Better still, these homebrewed horrors only get better when you're drunk off your ass (since his pics induce the same type of slow-witted nausea you end up with after chugging a 12-pack of Milwaukee's Best). I first recognized Schiff's debatable talents while sitting in a pool of my own spilt beer at Rick Sullivan's long-lost Gore Gazette Film Series, and seeing this pic again, a decade-plus later, it's still difficult to describe the depths of amateurish cheese it reaches. Are you ready? It kicks off with a female sunbather attacked by a guy with a pillowcase over his head, who beats her, runs her over with a power lawnmower, and saves the 'mulch' for later. Besides Pillow-head, there's a murderous biker named Zedd (oddly enough, Peter Greene played a biker/psycho named Zedd in *PULP FICTION*. Coincidence? Or another Quentin T. homage?), plus a creep who collects the female body parts for his leprous, gooey-faced, cannibal pop, while sputtering to his backseat bagful of guts. Much of the movie is padded with a rogue-cop/hero, who gets suspicious after tripping across a wormy corpse and decides to take out these sickos. Nevertheless, stick with it for the hilariously ripe dialogue ("Last week I found a girl's body buried at the beach." "Big tits?"). Yeah, this certainly ain't no Clifford Odets. It's barely even Herschell Gordon Lewis, come to think of it. But Schiff blind ywades into this cinematic psychosis, with enough skanky, grue-drenched tidbits to keep degenerates giggling. Whether it's a cop getting his head hammered in, chunks of fake flesh ripped off a dead femme, or a not-so-friendly chainsaw-encounter between father and son. Sigh. They don't make 'em like they used to. And no matter how hideous they can be, I'd rather watch a dozen Nathan Schiff movies than one Richard Donner pile of steaming feces any day. While on the subject, does anybody out there know whatever happened to Schiff? I'd hate to learn that he's selling Amway products nowadays.

TROUBLE MAN (1973). Just when I thought I'd seen all the blaxploitation biggies, I finally snag a copy of this ultimately-disappointing 20th Century-Fox programmer. But even if the entire film sucked, I'd still recommend it just for Marvin Gaye's title tune, which you'll be humming for days afterward. Every self-respecting moviegoer knows Ivan Dixon from his acting roles in everything from *NOTHIN' BUT A MAN* to *CAR WASH*, but he proved his directing chops with '70s fare like *THE SPOOK WHO SAT BY THE DOOR* and this pic, which, although no urban breakthrough, pumps the screen with funky attitude and backstabbing lowlife. Plus, it stars the very suave Robert Hooks (*SWEET LOVE*, *BITTER*) as the badass Mr. T—a pool shark, a ladies' man, as well as the chilliest hood in the city, who'll solve any problem. For a pnce, that is. Of course, he's also a licensed private eye (a la *SHAFT*) who doesn't give a rat's ass about

talking back to The Man. It all comes down when Mr. T is called on by a pair of monochromatic mobsters (Paul Winfield and Ralph "Pa Walton" Waite), whose illegit gambling dens are getting robbed by masked hoodlums. Unbeknownst to 'T', it's all a scam that gets him hauled into jail for the murder of a pal of Mr. Big (Julius Harris), then getting sucked into a quagmire of half-wit "super-niggers" and double-dealing mobsters squabbling over turf. Sounds good? Not so fast, because even though Hooks has a cool edge and a no-bullshit charm, the film surrounding him is all set-up, without much pay-off. For the first hour, we simply watch 'T' dicked around, until he *finally* takes control of his destiny and offs the shitheads who framed him. Things continue to liven up in the final 15 minutes, as 'T' forces his

way into Waites' penthouse (with a trail of double-barreled-shotgun-blasted whiteys in his wake) and takes on this greasy, Sears-shopping cracker. Unfortunately, the first hour is too laid back for slobbering 42nd Street fanatics in search of funky thrills. And despite a few rippin' sequences, this flick bares too little meat, and too much stuffing. With additional support from Paula Kelly and Gordon Jump (*WKRP*) as—you guessed it—a fat-assed honky

THE HARD ROAD (1970). Let's not mince words. This deliriously crude, four-star exploitation *must* be endured by any self-respecting, acid-head, schlock-o-holic. First off, director/photographer/editor Gary Graver is one of the unsung heroes of the film world—whether he's photographing Orson Welles' *F FOR FAKE* or every recent Jim Wynorski pic; working as a 2nd-unit director on arthouse gems like *A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE*; directing a slew of porno titles under the pseudonym

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PIECE BY PIECE!**

**TROUBLE
MAN**

Starring ROBERT HOOKS
Co-Starring PAUL WINFIELD
RALPH WAITE

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COLOR BY DE LUXE

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10 00

DOOR
OUR GOLDEN
AGE CLUB
1800 & 1900 P.M. FOR
1800 & 1900 P.M. FOR
40 AND OVER

FREE
PARKING
ON SALINA
STREET
AFTER 6 P.M.

Robert McCallum, or directing this type of ultra-sleazy, teen-gone-wrong pic. It's an incredible career, and this hyper-melodramatic swill will leave you cheering for more. Because despite a cautionary veneer, it's actually high-octane sleaze, pandering to every demoralizing cliché. Yeah! Connie Nelson stars as Pam, a 17-year-old Nice Girl who begins the movie pregnant (no surprise, with an abusive, drunk, bleach-blonde mom like Liz Renay). But before giving up her baby for adoption, a Kroger Babb-style Physician/Narrator suddenly interrupts, to fill the viewer in on the facts behind 'how a pregnancy works', complete with cheesy Sex Ed illos! Of course, this is only the beginning of Pam's tribulations. Her boss (a music agent) ogles her through a one-way mirror, she smokes grass with a famous rock star, freaks out, goes on The Pill, takes the nympho route, moves onto "stimulant drugs", leaps into a psychedelic hippie van, and contracts a social disease. But wait! The film's not even half over yet! This is a ventable inventory of social ills, all piled onto one innocent young girl and moving at the speed (if not the slickness) of Russ Meyer's *B.V.D.*—right down to the ultra-groovy cast of stoned cretins and foul fashion sense. Soon Pam is turning tricks and shacking up with Jimmy the Smack Addict, who beats her when she wastes her cash on frivolous things, like the rent. This isn't like those half-hearted studio Drug Movies, where smoking a single joint was enough to prove that Drugs Are Bad (of course, in this film,

so is the acting, script, et cetera). Instead, Graver rips loose with a battering ram-style, leading to a delirious downer. It's difficult to find hardcore propaganda like this anymore—an anti-drug, anti-abortion, anti-fun film that happily dredges the gutter for its misplaced melodrama. My only question? Why hasn't someone built a shrine to this movie already?

GUMS (1976). During its first release, this no-budget softcore-version of

JAWS played midnight shows forever. But even if it sounds like a porno relic that might well be left forgotten, you'll be shocked to discover just how watchably dopey it is, thanks to some savvy casting. The plot involves a dick-sucking mermaid (a naked Terri Hall, sans any expensive fish-tail), who leaves her victims dead (but satisfied). The rest follows Benchley's well-worn structure of the Sheriff closing down the beach due to the Sex Monster, and the townsfolk (in between blow jobs) getting furious, including Jaglom-arthouse-regular Zack Norman. But the moment a reward is issued for this "she devil", up pops Brother Theodore at a town meeting, doing a Robert Shaw schtick (albeit in a Nazi Officer's uniform) as Captain Carl Clitoris. For folks who don't know Theodore, in addition to frequent Letterman appearances, he's been a Village celeb since the '70s, thanks to a startling one-man show that's been running forever (and which I first caught back in '83). And even if he's only in a handful of scenes, it's nice to know that even if Theodore had to sign onto this cinemamure to pay the rent, this mad fucker steals the show with such classy lines as "let me piss on her tits, let me rip apart her fucking entertainment center." What a nut! Meanwhile, any waterbound male is being orally-attacked by this topless "great white mermaid in heat." And while awaiting the end credits, we get blow-up dolls, a lesbo beach encounter, a fake Fuehrer, and plenty of "comically" concealed hardcore footage (with cartoon illos conveniently obscuring any unsightly cum shots). Not to mention, the entire cast suddenly replaced by puppets during the final five minutes (!?) and a raunchy "Mack the Knife" homage tune over the end credits (courtesy of Bred Fiedel, who went onto dozens of legit musical scores, like **THE TERMINATOR** and **THE BIG EASY**). Theodore brings the only energy to this drivel—it's like he's on speed throughout—and director Robert J. Kaplan just barely keeps it up for the flick's whopping 65 minutes. A crude but inventive porno aberration (and first in a long line of X-rated Spielberg take-offs, including **JURANAL PARK**, **E.T. THE EXTRA TESTICLE** and **SCHINDLER'S FIST**).

GOD'S ANGRY MAN (1982). Despite critical kudos with **AGUIRRE** and **FITZCARRALDO**, some of Werner Herzog's most outrageous work remains barely distributed. Because in between his features, the guy cranks out some of the most extreme documentaries around. In this instance, we enter the world of Dr. Gene Scott, the Howard Stern of demented religious programming. And although Scott's televised rants are renowned in many areas of the U.S., when I first caught this pic a dozen years ago, I didn't have a clue who the hell Dr. Gene was, since his ravings were never telecast in New York. But after this incredible 45-minute profile, I was hooked on the crackpot. Toss in Herzog, and these two make the perfect couple...Essentially, Scott's show seems like your average, low-I.Q.'ed, fire 'n' brimstone public access show, starring the white-haired (instantly-volatile)

AT MIDNIGHT FRIDAY

GUMS

Starring **TERRI HALL & BROTHER THEODORE**

8th Ave & 7th St
NYC
6/7/79 35

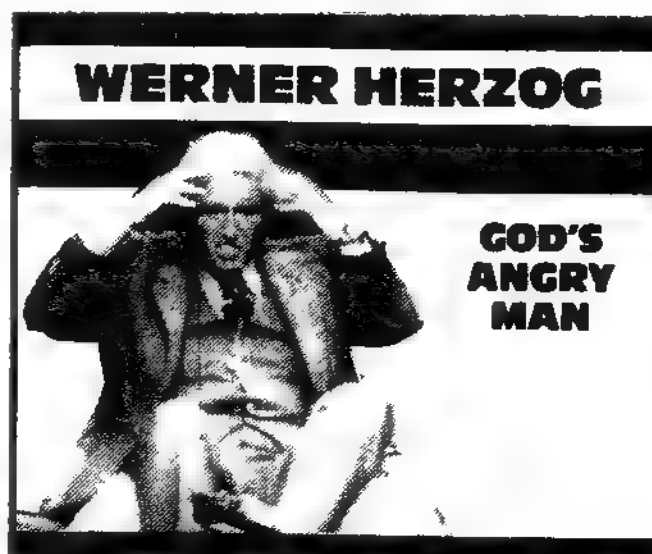
ELGIN
CINEMA

\$2.50

RATED X

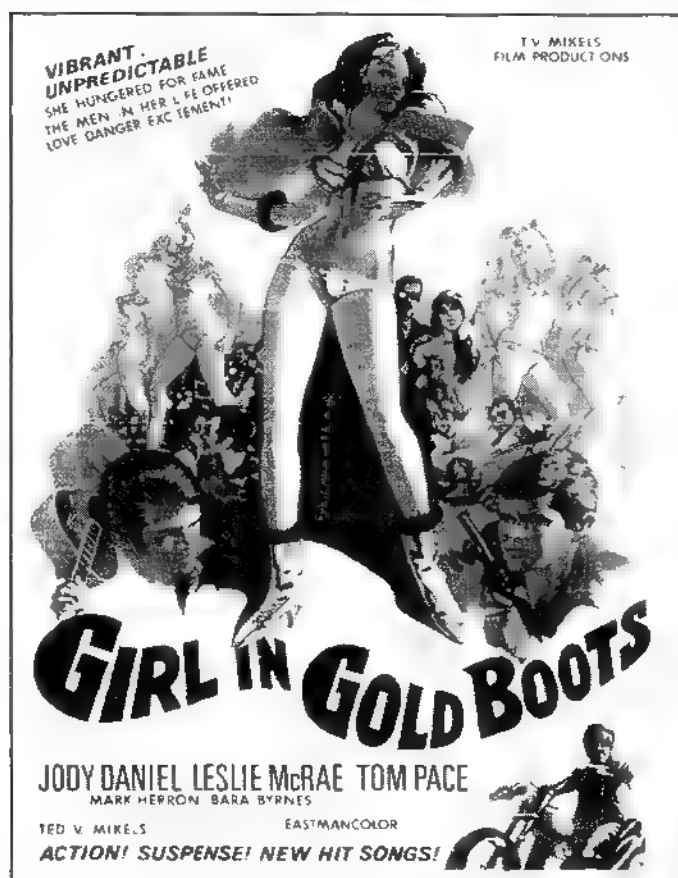
Scott. But instead of piously begging for cash from the public, Scott has a unique way of shaking down his viewers—he gets pissed off at 'em! Even better, he'll stare silently into the camera lens until somebody calls in with a \$600 pledge. So forget those sanctimonious bastards on **THE 700 CLUB**, because Scott is the *real* madman! Even when he gets the dough, he *still* screams that his lazy, cheap viewers didn't cough it up quickly enough!

It would've been easy to pull a cheap hatchet job on this rabid clown, but Herzog gets points for peering under Gene's Psycho Facade in order to discover the Psycho lurking underneath. Sitting in his limo, Scott rambles at length about being persecuted by the government, his work schedule (3 to 10 hours of live TV broadcasting a day, six days a week), his sterility, and even takes us to his scary parents. Loaded with clips from his shows, this is a turd's-eye view of Christian idiocy, complete with a phone switchboard full of teary, middle-aged housewives and his creepy male s'ngers. There's even his collection of "bureaucratic Monkeys" (those battery-operated, clapping monkey toys) to represent the FCC. Herzog is obviously fascinated by this uniquely deranged individual, and you'll be too, after this guided tour into the heights of white-trash gullibility.



SCREAMING BOY (Snake Oil Video; 1992). If Gene Scott is a little too sane for your tastes, perhaps Jonathan Bell (a.k.a. "Screaming Boy") will be more to your liking, since he's certifiably creepy as fuck. But first, a li'l history lesson about this unforgettable cretin. Moving from Canada to Texas in order to start his own ministry, Bell proved that he was a typical, arrogant Christian by spending his days living off a crippled old woman's government checks, trying to drown her retarded son, making the pair sleep on the floor of the one-bedroom apartment that *she* paid for, and was finally arrested when he beat the ol' gal for not following his God-given instructions. After the charges were dropped, Bell rewarded the world with this pair of hour-long, loud-mouthed, gut-busting spiritual-assaults, telecast on Dallas Cable Access. This is minimalist, modern-day fire 'n' brimstone, while our

bloated host earns his nickname by screaming his lungs out like the Sam Kinison of screwed-up, self-righteous, "prophet/evangelist" scum. When he's not trying to hawk his pathetic books, his high-decibel rants include: How one-quarter of the world is going to die of AIDS in five years. How he can't afford to buy air time because his car was stolen. How if you don't spank your kids they'll grow up to be rapists. How a Demon came into his room and stuck its fist down Bell's mouth. But primarily, every five minutes, he mentions how he was sexually abused by homosexuals as a child. And after hearing about this guy's incessant visions of naked youngsters writhing in Hell, you get a queasy feeling about Bell's obsession with setting up "ranches" across the U.S. to aid sexually abused boys. It's rare to capture one of these wholesale lunatics in his element, and trust me, this tape's a classic—with Bell ranking on homosexuals, abortion, fornication, "rich guys", and how he'll be in Heaven on Judgment Day and we won't. Even J.F.K.'s assassination conspiracy gets tossed in! This is prime Christian-crackpot idiocy, offering further proof of what can happen to you if you read the Bible "five to eight hours a day."



GIRL IN GOLD BOOTS (1968). Ted V. Mikels fans have reason to rejoice, since most of his best known features (including *THE DOLL SQUAD* and *BLOOD ORGY OF THE SHE DEVILS*) are now available through Walterscheid Productions at a sell-thru price. And even if this Mikels' blast from the groovy '60s is far from a classic, it's certainly worth a look for the sexy dance revues. This showbiz melodrama even kicks off with one of these fab musical numbers, courtesy of the "Gold Boot" Girl Dancers—who gyrate to a generic rock band in gold bikinis, micro-skirts and go-go boots. Needless to add, all the butt-naked, choreography-impaired routines in *SHOWGIRLS* don't have the combined sex appeal of this one eye opener. Unfortunately, it's all downhill from there. Because even though it has all the right ingredients for top-drawer sleaze, the script remains thoroughly moralistic and safely in PG territory. Leslie McRae stars as a truckstop waitress named Michelle, who dreams

of running away from her drunk dad and becoming a famous go-go dancer. So when a diner customer says he's on his way to Hollywood, she grabs a ride. Once in Tinseltown, she visits a theme nightspot called Haunted House, packed with cheap bric-a-brac and (best of all) those crazy, barely-clothed Gold Boot gals. Of course, in no time, the curvaceous Michelle is headlining the joint as the Girl in Gold Boots, and suddenly thinks she's got the world on a leash because she's getting applause from a dozen horny drunks in a shithole nightclub. Along the way, Michelle also has to choose between two men. The immoral Buz, who deals drugs. Or Cntter, a nice (albeit dull as Spam) guy who *really* cares for her. The pic even tosses in a prison heist subplot at the end, but by then, most viewers will have been lulled into a deep sleep from this earnest (but tedious) tale. Though loaded with bad '60s fashion sense and amusing peripheral details, this drab li'l tale even lacks the obligatory T&A you'd expect in any good film about struggling at the lowest-rungs of showbiz. Lemme tell you, it sure ain't no *BEYOND THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS*.

CAGED HEAT 3000 (1995). Back in '74, Jonathan Demme's *CAGED HEAT* became the model for the burgeoning Women In Prison genre, proving you could have your T&A, without leaving your entire brainstem out in the lobby. I only wish the same could be said about this futuristic Babes Behind Bars rotgut, courtesy of Roger Corman's New Horizons, which (hard to believe) looks cheaper than the original, despite spending at least ten whole dollars on the special effects. Welcome to the Onon Women's Pena Colony, where feisty Cassandra Leigh (*MIDNIGHT TEASE*) is the new fish in D-Block, the most sadistic section of the place. The dim excuse for a plot has a local scumbag running for local office, and in order to quell prison unrest, needs to have a jailed attorney murdered. He then pits one prison faction against the other with the help of some double-dealing supporting sluts. But in all honesty, the only excuse for this movie is to watch the inmates catfight, take futuristic showers, strut about in Lycra prison uniforms, and get tortured by the fey male guards (electric shocks administered to their gravity-defying breasts). The female characters are interchangeable, and as far as I can tell, the only reason Leigh got the starring role was because she has the largest tits. Unfortunately for her, there's no such thing as Talent Implants. Even worse, although the constant nudity and abuse will reel in indiscriminating idiots on a dateless Friday night, the pic has all the erotic excitement of a *PUNKY BREWSTER* rerun. The pieces are there, but director Aaron Osborne doesn't have a clue how to put 'em together into anything more than stillborn exploitation—lacking the original's subversive twists, in favor of cheap futuristic sets (no doubt, left over from an earlier Corman release), dull nudity, lethargic action sequences, and the rare distinction of being one of the few sci-fi women-in-prison pics to be filmed in Tijuana.

THE SANDMAN (1995). Never one to give up, even in the face of overwhelming adversity (such as a complete lack of filmmaking talent), J.R. Bookwalter is out hawking his latest, shittier-than-ever horror movie, which, like all his fare, feels like a home movie made by slow high schoolers using their lunch money. This one's set in a trailer park (so his inept actors look right at home), where the white trash residents suddenly begin dying in their sleep from brain embolisms (and the problem with this is ?) Gary, a writer of crappy sex novels is the only person who suspects the truth—that a creature called The Sandman has been invading the low I.Q. ed residents' dreams and feeding off of 'em (hmm, I've never heard that plot before, have you?), leaving its victim deadlier than the scriptwriter's imagination. Unfortunately for us all, Bookwalter doesn't know when to shut up and get his film in gear, padding the deck with quirky supporting half-wits (including a wacko Vietnam vet and a Metal Head 2nd cousin), before Gary goes after The Sandman like a slacker Buford Pusser. But it's not over yet, masochists, because

wait until you see their pathetic excuse for a title creature, which consists of a hooded monk's robe, light-bulb eyes, and cheap skeleton hands. This flick is so terminally boring you wanna take a pick ax to your TV (or better still, Bookwalter's squishy l'il head), while utilizing the highly touted "film-look" video processing (which only makes it look like a color-drained, fourth-generation dupe). Even though I went into the pic with muted expectations—this is a no-budget production, mind you—it stumbles on every conceivable level, and doesn't even have the good sense to pander to the viewer with cheap gore 'n' sex. Further proof that J.R. pumps out his movies with all the finesse of a dog taking a dump on the sidewalk. But afterward, at least the dog doesn't try to convince you to buy it from him.

ATROCITY (1997). Yes, it's more new Japanese dementia, and even if it lacks a certain finesse, director Katsuya Matsumura keeps it brief (68 whopping minutes) and tasteless. Just imagine the paranoid combustion of Scorsese's *AFTER HOURS* crossed with all the charm of *LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT*. Masa Endo stars as a nerdy lab techie named Shinichi who, instead of getting a flesh 'n' blood girlfriend, spends his time working a little too methodically on a Nude Female model kit for his own good. His sedate summer vacation doesn't last long though, because Shinichi soon has a run-in with a street gang, who strip him down and beat him up. Plus, since the gang's gay leader takes a liking to the l'il twerp, they also smash Shinichi's naked Barbie (the sledgehammer symbol of his heterosexuality) and drag the schmuck into their debauched lifestyle, beginning with a visit to their swanky apartment to meet one of the gang's female victims. This is where it starts to get grim, kids, complete with a rampant misogyny that'll send most women packing. You see, these adorable l'il rascals torture ladies until they become mindless slaves, and their present captive is a groveling mess who's been raped, starved, and strung out on so many drugs she's more savage than civilized. Then, in an attempt to convince Shinichi that "being a brute is fun", the gang invades the guy's house and gang rapes a girl who had the piss poor luck to be visiting him. Well, even a wimp has his limits, especially when his life is being ravaged by these fuckheads—leading to a climax that makes *STRAW DOGS* look like *ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN*, featuring an apartment full of corpses and our Everyman Hero becoming more screwed up than the gang. It's all accomplished with a no-frills nonchalance that belies the illness prompting it. Loaded with nudity, wall-to-wall brutality, and anti-social behavior. That's entertainment (?).

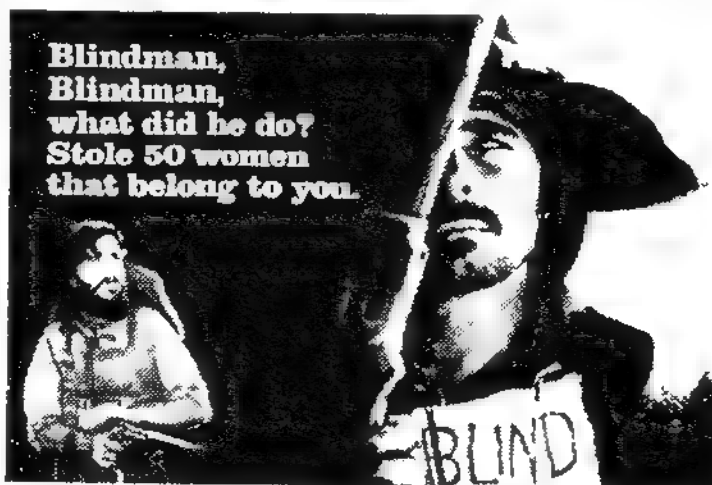
LET MY PUPPETS COME

(1976). Gerard Damiano was the kingpin of the Golden Age of Porn, with such standard-bearers as *THE DEVIL IN MISS JONES* and *DEEP THROAT*. But after creating these jism-house classics, where can a filmmaker go? In Damiano's lovably-perverted case, you jettison all those boning human leads and take a spin at Hand Puppet Sex in this 41-minute, hard-X gem. And if you thought Peter Jackson was ballsy with his puppet masterpiece, *MEET THE FEEBLES*, this jaw-dropper proves that Damiano was sending up the Muppets long before, in spectacularly hardcore fashion. The plot is simple 'n' stoopid. A trio of

businessmen are in deep to Mr. Big, so they decide to make a porno pic in order to save their felt asses (if puppets technically have asses, that is). And while they piece together "The Last Porno Film", we get all the anatomically-correct puppets you'll ever need to witness. A Head Nurse goes down on her dying patient's terminal hard-on, there's a commercial jingle for vaginal deodorant ("use new Sweet Fish every day, keeps those skunky cunts away"); Al Goldstein makes a special appearance, with a red-headed puppetess giving him a blow-job; and since these are *only* puppets, there's even some Bestiality, when a dog fucks his female owner (complete with penetration close-ups). Meanwhile, the jokes are almost as stale as Jim Henson's (the director orders "Sing, you prick!" and a giant penis begins his musical number), with an avalanche of double-entendre names like "Clitoris Leachman". So as not to totally alienate the audience, a few human porn princesses make cameo appearances—like Penny Nicholls as a near-naked barmaid. The puppets themselves are cheap 'n' shabby, and a couple look sue-ably close to specific Muppets (albeit with engorged penises). Even if the pic's high concept wears thin halfway in, you can't help but wonder, as you watch these puppets screwing, if any viewers out there actually got off on this shit. I'd like to think not...Unfortunately, I also know better.

BLINDMAN (1972). A spaghetti western with Ringo Starr as one of the villains? Sign me up! And after the dust (and blood) settles, this Spanish-Italian production is odd enough to stake its own small claim on the genre. Tony Anthony stars in the title role of a deadly gunfighter who's blind as a bat (shades of Zatoichi!), while director Ferdinando Baldi has you immediately cheering the guy, when he enters a piss-ant town, nonchalantly blows up his enemies with a handful of dynamite, and rides off on his faithful Seeing Eye Horse. Of course, nobody takes this *Blindman* seriously—that is, until he begins wasting the unshaven supporting cretins. His primary goal is to track down Domingo, a thief who stole 50 women this sightless

gringo was supposed to deliver to horny miners in Texas, with Anthony going against all odds to get his property back from the "Mexican pigs" who've imprisoned the half-naked mail-order-brides. The plot continues with the usual twisted allegiances and enough wholesale slaughter to keep the viewer awake. It all adds up to a solid (if unexceptional) overseas oater. But when Candy, one of the sadistic Mexican bandits, turns out to be a bearded Ringo Starr, for an instant you think this entire movie is gonna turn into a shaggy Beatles joke. Nope, because Ringo puts all campy fears to rest, by being perfectly in tune with the film's slimeball vision, even happily torturing our captured *Blindman*. And although credited above the title, it's just



ARKCO FILMS PRESENTS

TONY ANTHONY RINGO STARR "BLINDMAN"

a tiny gig for the ex-moptop, with his character confined halfway through. Essentially, this is an unfocused mess, which nevertheless keeps you intrigued by its misogynistic underbelly (Women = Chatel, or when necessary to the plot, Rape-Bait) and a cool, but underdeveloped lead (fault that one to Anthony, who lacks the charisma to carry a movie). Despite a rousing finale, when Domingo has to face off *Blindman* on even terms, it's still no surprise this didn't go onto sequels (unlike *DJANGO* [SC#7]). In this case, once is enough.

THE BATWOMAN [La Mujer Murcielago] (1967). The name Rene Cardona might not mean much to modern-day multiplex babies, but back in the '60s, this guy was one of the finest Mexplotation directors on the scene, with hits like *WRESTLING WOMEN VS. THE AZTEC MUMMY* and the nerve-numbing matinee fave, *SANTA CLAUS [SC#5]*. Now, thanks to VSoM's subtitling skills, I can finally understand what the hell is going on in this high camp, superheroine saga, which not only rips-off the '60s TV-series, but gives it a sexy, distaff spin that even Yvonne Craig's skintight wardrobe could never generate. This colorful fantasy begins on the beaches of the sunny Acapulco, where local wrestlers are turning up dead in the surf, with their pituitary glands sucked dry. Even though most people would consider their murders more of a public service than a crime, the world goes into a panic and only Batwoman (Maura Monti) can save the day. A gorgeous millionaire by day, whenever crime threatens the wrestling community, she slips on her head mask and goes into action. Of course, when she's not crimelfighting, she's a professional wrestler (oddly enough, the moment she steps into the ring, she looks 75 pounds heavier—almost as if they were using a *wrestling double!* No!). And how can you *not* love a female superhero who parachutes to duty in only her mask and a bikini—spending the rest of the movie squeezed into that teeny get-up, three-sizes-too-tight tights and low-cut dresses? Now *there's* a superhero you can respect. It seems that a harebrained mad scientist needs wrestler's brains (isn't that an oxy-moron?) in order to create a Gillman. Unfortunately, once the scaly critter is fully grown it becomes difficult to restrain, so the crazed Doc decides to create a mate and goes after our voluptuous lead's pituitary. Don't expect any lavish FX (we're lucky to get a bright-red Gillman costume that *doesn't* have the zipper showing), because the filmmakers are more interested in focusing on their south-of-the-border Tura Satana. Gigantically ridiculous, briskly paced, and mind-bogglingly sexist. The perfect combo when you're got a fridge full of ice cold Piels and need to give your braincells an 80-minute vacation.

HOUSE OF A THOUSAND DOLLS

(1967). This pic has all the makings of a solid sleaze-fest. The script drops us in the middle of Tangiers (though actually lensed in Spain), where we're informed that thousands of young women are regularly kidnapped and sold into white slavery and prostitution. Plus, it stars Vincent Price, who rarely slummed so deep into the toilet, as a two-bit nightclub magician named The Great Manderville, who uses his phony baloney clairvoyant act as a cover for a crime ring. Using his hypnotic powers, he kidnaps pretty young women from his audience, and has them shipped (in coffins, no less) to the notorious title brother. But talk about false advertising! Instead of a thousand babes, I only see about 15 gals lounging around the dump in their Frederick's of Morocco nighties. Oddly enough, this abduction routine has been going on for some time, with nobody getting suspicious that all of Vince's luscious volunteers disappear during the finale, never to return. That is, until

our hero, an American lunk played by George Nader, loses his missus and begins rocking the boat. Thank goodness for Price, who lends this tedium its only touch of class, suavely strolling through the proceedings in his dapper top hat and cape. It's not enough to save this rubbish though, because Price disappears for much of the movie—thus saving himself from further embarrassment. You can only wonder if Vincent knew what type of crock he'd signed onto, especially when his character visits a gambling parlor featuring female mud wrestling. The poor guy. Even when it starts to get rougher, with a curvaceous redhead manacled and whipped, it only lasts 15 lousy seconds (reportedly, a 10 minute longer, more prurient cut was released overseas), leaving the viewer stranded with the badly-dubbed characters, a hokey script, and deadening direction by Jeremy Summers. The best aspect of the flick is its deceptively-lurid ad campaign, which is only wasted on this low-energy wash-out.

FAST COMPANY (1979). On the surface, this unassuming, Canadian-lensed flick about race cars and their drivers smacks of macho dreck, with a plot we've seen a dozen times. The cast is littered with exploitation superstars, including William Smith, John Saxon and the always-radiant Claudia Jennings (on the other hand, nowadays

she's probably not so radiant after all). So what makes it different? It's directed by everyone's favorite flesh-revisionist, David Cronenberg, who snuck this pic in between *RABID* and *THE BROOD*, and equipped with his first million-dollar-plus budget, brought his love for auto racing to the screen. Just don't expect any visceral revelations (giant slugs do *not* leap out of Claudia's mouth), because Cronenberg trades cheap thrills for a solid character-driven melodrama, capturing the day-to-day lifestyle of a small-time racing team (while keeping the macho bullshit to a minimum). Smith stars as the charismatic Lonnie "Lucky Man" Johnson, the king of the local drag racers. Saxon is the sleazy head of FastCo, Lucky's oil company sponsor. And although Jennings doesn't show up 'til the second half (playing Sammy, Smith's long-suffering "old lady"), it's an honest-to-goodness character instead of her usual, cardboard T&A roles. In between the non-stop footage of real-life drag races, funny cars and revving engines, the plot has Saxon (always top notch as a scumbag) putting the thumbscrews to Smith to make more cash for him.

FAST COMPANY

Strap yourself into a car that flies
240 miles an hour down a quarter mile track.
Drag racing: that's what FAST COMPANY is all about.
100 minutes of sound and fury exploding on the screen.
The danger. The rush. The victory.

FAST COMPANY will be available for summer release.



WILLIAM SMITH • CLAUDIA JENNINGS
JOHN SAXON

But when Smith proves he's got a few scruples left, double-dealing Saxon takes back Smith's car, replaces him on the circuit and even resorts to murder. After sitting through today's avalanche of cheap no-talent throwaway pics, it's refreshing to watch a drive-in movie that has some talent behind it, particularly the fluid photography courtesy of Mark Irwin (who would continue working with Cronenberg in *VIDEODROME* and *THE DEAD ZONE*), while cramming his camera inside the cars, to capture driver's P.O.V. Though this aberration is usually ignored when people discuss Cronenberg's career, it proves that he puts as much care into this outwardly generic tale as he does with his most deeply personal work.

THE MAZE (1953). Originally released in 3-D, at the height of that 'technological breakthrough', this cheesy monster movie contains, quite honestly, one of the dumbest pay-offs in the history of horror. Most of the flick is a slow, occasionally creepy B-movie, with a distinctive visual flair thanks to director/production-designer William Cameron Menzies, best known for *THINGS TO COME* and the original *INVADERS FROM MARS*. Even though this pic was released the same year as *INVADERS*, it instantly seeped through the cracks (trying to hide from the viewer's unintentional laughter, methinks). Genre-fave Richard Carlson (*IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE*) is an average schmuck who inherits a dank old Scottish castle. There's even a curse on the mildewed place, since none of the Barons of Craven Castle have ever lived to a ripe old age. After leaving town to check out his new estate, his fiancée (Veronica Hurst) gets an abrupt Dear Jane letter, and being a pigheaded dame, she visits the place to get a face-to-face explanation of why she's getting the ol' heave-ho—only to discover that Carlson has aged 20 years, thanks to a supernatural presence lurking about the estate. This is slow, predictable stuff, but at least the mist-covered castle is a sumptuous treat, straight out of a Charles Addams illo, complete with cobwebby corridors, bats flapping about, and a backyard highlighted by a giant, sinister hedge maze (featuring a big Keep Out sign, which the dim-witted Hurst ignores). Things pick up in the final half hour, when we get a glimpse of a creature slithering about the castle's Tower Room. Would you believe that after all this portentous build-up, the big family secret is that the real Baron (Sir Roger) is a 200-year-old freak who looks exactly like a guy in a cheap frog suit? And who crawls about in the middle of the night on all fours, scaring the crap out of the ladies? This giant frog wouldn't scare my mom, much less an audience expecting a gruesome monster. Obviously realizing what a crock they're peddling, this ridiculous Frog-Man is only on-screen for five minutes, before committing suicide (pass the Kleenex). Beautifully filmed, but in the long run, who cares?

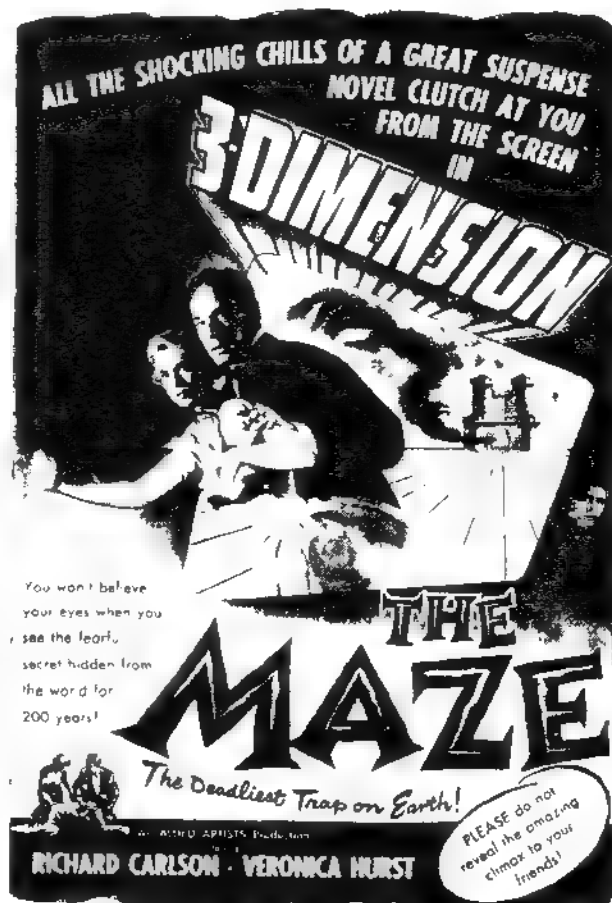
AFROS, MACKS N' ZODIACS Vol.1 (1994). Mike Vraney's *Something Weird Video* catalog is crammed with every imaginable form of exploitation, so it's about time he focused on one of my favorite genres, the blaxploitation flick. With the exception of the occasional *SHAFT* rerun on late nite cable, most folks don't know shit about the heyday of black action pics, so this funky coming attractions compilation is more than just a nostalgic treat. It's a history lesson for a whole new generation who were too young to experience the sleazy joys of 42nd Street and the stars who helped create it. So who better to host this retrospect of the best (and worst) blaxploitation trailers than Dolemite himself, Rudy Ray Moore! With a trio of ratty-afro'ed babes circling him, and a disco ball over his shoulder, his segments must've cost 10 bucks to film—but somehow, it's appropriate—with Rudy interrupting the trailers for hand-held camerawork and age-old pussy jokes, while the ladies struggle to maintain their limp smiles. What follows is a non-stop barrage of '70s fashions and

hairstyles, cheesy voice-overs, emulsion scratches, and wall-to-wall white corpses. In addition to (relatively) mainstream classics like *THE MACK* and *CLEOPATRA JONES*, you get more esoteric titles like the Black-Doctor-turned-White-Psycho epic, *DR. BLACK AND MR. HYPE* ("Super-strong, supernatural, and super-baadd!") and *EBONY, IVORY AND JADE* ("Jump back, jack! Or your skull is cracked!") It's also a field day for Fred "The Hammer" Williamson fanatics, because how often can you relive fare like *THAT MAN BOLT* and *THE SOUL OF NIGGER CHARLEY*? Additional proof that

Fred was truly the High Priest of Black Action (and come to think of it, still is). Even if they stick in some late-'70s studio groaners like Cosby's *LET'S DO IT AGAIN*, it's worth a look for the real cultural items, like *WATTSTAX*, *SOUL TO SOUL* and Iceberg Slim's *TRICK BABY*. The only downside? This 90-minute, four-star blast only leaves you wanting more.

ISLAND WOMEN (1976). Director Edwin C. Dietrich was never accused of subtlety, but he certainly had a crotch-level knack for sleaze, which makes him the perfect choice if you're looking for a mean-spirited, no-apologies-offered, T&A-stuffed *Women In Prison* pic. Meanwhile, fans will relish the opportunity to see Porno-Starlet-turned-Horror-Babe, Brigitte Lahaie (*FASCINATION* [SC#7]) doing what she does best—taking her clothes off and enthusiastically earning the title *la creme de la cunts*. Avoiding all of the delicacies of U.S. WIP flicks (like the barest wisp of a believable narrative), we arrive at an island in the middle of the tropics, where the tinpot general-in-charge needs to clean up the prostitution trade before a U.N. delegation arrives. The answer? Arrest all the whores and ship 'em off to

Tago Mago (also referred to under the winsome nickname of Rat Island), where they can be far from international scrutiny, but still keep their legs spread for the greasy guards. The head mistress of the place is played by Ilsa Kracht as Carla, a chunky *SHE WOLF OF THE S.S.*-clone who got her job by screwing the country's Military-Leader-of-the-Moment. Brigitte plays one of the whores-turned-inmates, first glimpsed on-the-job during a lengthy strip 'n' fuck intro, only to be dragged naked from her bed (along with several of her gal pals) and locked up on an embellished rock in the middle of the ocean. From there on, we get any excuse to have these dozen-or-so female prisoners undress. First, the requisite shower, followed by a painful gynecological exam at the hands of the isle's sickfuck Doc. Then, in response to an escape attempt, the inmates have to go naked at all times—including work details. Of course, in this universe, the women don't mind being repeatedly violated, because (as they so politely put it) "I need sex," making this the perfect film-geek fantasy (and yet another reason it never played the New York Film Festival). Meanwhile, our Aryan Commander Carla is screwing any warm body, male or female. It all adds up to the ultimate in Eurotrash femme prison flicks, stripped down to its barest essentials. Sure, the movie sucks, but the audience it was aimed at won't care, since it gives 'em exactly what they want—continual debasement, simulated schtupping, and acres of bare flesh.

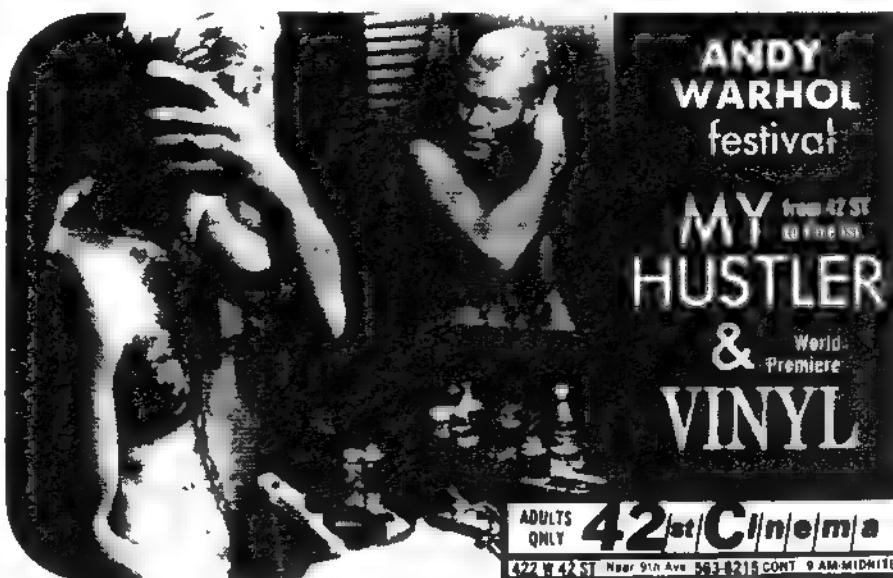


WHO KILLED TEDDY BEAR? (1965). This b&w psycho-sleaze-thriller is tops in trash, keeping in mind when it was first released. And though certainly not a *good* movie, its sick-assed plot twists and authentic NYC setting make it a cult oddity worth pursuing. Juliet Prowse plays Nora, a comely young novice to the Big City, who works as a hostess at a trendy Times Square nightspot and spends her evenings annoyed by obscene phone calls to her apartment. Nora should know better than to leave her curtains open after dark, because that freak on the phone is also a voyeuristic neighbor who watches her through binoculars. He even breaks into her pad while she's out, and leaves a decapitated teddy bear as a gift. Meanwhile, the real star of the flick is Sal Mineo, who plays Lawrence, a sad-eyed busboy at Prowse's club—who spends his off-hours taking care of his slow-witted sister. And to nobody's surprise (except Prowse, of course), Mineo is her mystery sex fiend, with tawdry, traumatic flashbacks to explain his condition. And what a supporting cast! Jan Murray as a police Lieutenant who became obsessed with "perversions and degenerates" after his wife was raped and mutilated, Elaine Stritch as Juliet's lesbian boss, Daniel Travanti (a.k.a. Travanti) as a mute bouncer named Carlo, and Bruce Glover (Crispin's dad) as a detective. Unfortunately, although director Joseph Cates (Phoebe's dad) has all the right ingredients, his results are scattershot (one highlight is Sal and Juliet's liberating dance floor duet). Any psychology is puddle-deep, and the pic's wildest moments capture the scummiest niches (long gone) of the Times Square scene in all its seedy glory, as Mineo roams Deuce book stores and strip joints like any ordinary hard-up schmuck. This film pre-dates all the phone-sickies and sexual deviants that would take the grindhouse by storm throughout the '70s, while Sal's character is the prototype of every TAXI DRIVER-style urban psycho—quiet, tightly-wound, and a total failure when it comes to any normal human contact. Meanwhile, the amazing Mineo taps into a creepiness that would never make him a star, but instead, reminds you of the lonely, single guy down the street who stares a bit too long at the grade-school kids.

VINYL (1965). Ready or not, we've got a double dose of Andy Warhol's cinematic legacy (or should I say, lethargy?). And after watching the first, you'll realize that if Andy was still making movies today, even Film Threat wouldn't distribute his stuff. Sure, lots of hopelessly-trendy critics/pals raved about his technique—which amounted to turning on the camera and going out for lunch—but it plays better on paper than it does when you're suffering through it. This 'bold' b&w experiment is based (barely) on Burgess' *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, looks like it was filmed in a walk-in closet, and keeps its camera virtually static for the entire 70 minutes (only one close-up and one cut), as Andy's So-Called-Superstars play out the story of a teen deviant named Victor (Gerard Malanga). After Malanga dances to "Nowhere to Run", a cop tells him that "You're bad. But we can *make* you good." So Victor is tied to a chair, complete with a leather hood and a funnel strapped to his chest, and forced to watch "flickers" of assorted weirdness ("I see little children having their teeth pulled out by yellow dwarves"), until he's sick. While this is going on in the foreground, in the background a guy is tied up, stripped and force-fed poppers. The actors can barely pronounce their dialogue (yeah, I know...I'm *sooo* picky), and the only face of any note is underground-death-icon-in-training Edie Sedgwick, who sits atop a trunk as an "extra", smokes cigs and looks fabulously confused for the entire film (Edie once called Andy a "sadistic faggot", and I assume the sadistic part meant that he forced her to watch his

movies). In the middle of the torture, a guy comes on-screen to read the credits aloud, and it's capped off with Malanga and The Doc in an erotic clinch, and Edie gyrating seductively on amyls. Is it art? More like a dull, voyeuristic party with cue cards and a 16mm camera.

MY HUSTLER (1965). It's here that Warhol took his first baby steps toward the character-driven slice o' life that would later solidify into Paul Morrissey's *FLESH-HEAT-TRASH* trilogy. Not surprisingly, this 70-minute pic was also one of his first commercial successes, in large part thanks to its cast of bitchy queers and some Fire Island beach property. Edward Hood stars as a snippy Cherry Grove resident who calls up Dial-a-Hustler for a little companionship. The Goldenboy in question is a hunk of blonde beefcake played by the flawlessly vapid Paul America (a.k.a. Johnson), who sprawls about the sand like one of The Beach Boys on smack. While Paul does what he does best (flex and preen), Hood sits on his porch, discussing him with a female neighbor. That is, until another guy ("The Sugar Plum Fairy") strikes up a conversation with the lunk and Hood gets possessive. The second reel cuts to the bathroom of the beach house, and a one-take, improvised discussion between America and Joe Campbell as the older hustler. They shave, they walk around half-dressed, they discuss their lifestyle—and although the thought of two undraped male prostitutes discussing the sex biz might sound tawdry, you have to remember that this is Andy Warhol, with his relentlessly anti-style camerawork. At least Hood is appropriately catty, while the rest of the cast looks right, but shouldn't have been allowed to speak. Still, this is one of the rare pics from Andy that gives you a vague understanding of Warhol's cinematic allure—rather than looking like something discovered at a Whitney Museum rummage sale.



BARING IT ALL [a.k.a. Does Size Really Count?] (1969). Director Paul Bartel is known and loved for black comedies like *EATING RAOUL*, *PRIVATE PARTS* and *SHELF LIFE* [SC#6], not to mention loads of comic performances. But here's an early, sexploitation flick which he not only acted in, but also co-scripted with director Charles Hirsch. I'm surprised few of his filmographies mention it, because despite its lensed-in-a-weekend veneer, it's actually a lot of fetishistic fun, with Bartel playing a psychiatrist (hence his ugly suit) in charge of a group therapy session chock full of wackos (a couple of women, a catatonic, a hippie, a transvestite, and a deranged NYC cabbie played by Don Calfa). While each member of the Group exposes his-or-her sexual trauma (Cut to assorted lurid flashbacks, all lensed on a seemingly 20-dollar-budget), it plays like a satire of those old Kroger Babb-style T&A pics, posing as Public Service Messages.

First, a housewife is seduced by a lingerie-selling, door-to-door saleswoman. Then, a prim blonde (Ida Hempstead) who gets "raped all the time" explains how she's irresistible to men (since they all want to have sex with her after she flashes her bare breasts at 'em). An introverted ha ball named Mary admits that he can't get it up after a whore laughed at the size of his dick. But the oddest episode is the transvestite's, which begins when he (dressed as a she) picks up a guy, who turns out to actually be a woman, but screws her anyhow—only to get beaten up by his new boy/girlfriend's homophobic pals (Confused?) And who else but Bartel would offer up a guy tied on a Central Park rock, naked and spread-eagle (complete with all the ridicule that Manhattanite passers-bys can bestow)? For this type of normally greasy fare, Bartel and Hirsch give us plenty of bizarre bang for our buck, and a script crammed with gloriously repulsive throw-aways. Meanwhile, the no-name cast is terrific, with Bartel playing referee to their incessant bitching. Energetic and raunchy, this chaotic sex-pic brings a refreshing perversity to the usual, stale drive-in dreck. It's a zircon in the rough.

ENERGY!!! THE MOVIE (1993). Any pic that stars aging Acid Guru Timothy Leary (unlike his embellished cameos in indie fare like *ROADSIDE PROPHETS*) is worth unearthing. But after enduring this drivel, it's no big surprise it was never released in the States. Without question, director Andreas Marfori (*EVIL CLUTCH*, *DESPERATE CRIMES* w/Traci Lords) is one French Fry short of a Happy Meal, turning an underbaked script "in collaboration with Timothy Leary" into a fiasco that's best enjoyed for its eccentric, cinematic idiocy. Dr. Tm stars as Prof. Robert Pearce, a noted NY lecturer on geothermal energy, who is stuck in an empty Italian hotel with his sultry wife for five days, awaiting a conference of bigwigs. He's also the proud owner of a matchbox-sized power cell that'll run a city for two years—but that plot device becomes a secondary concern when a robbed, ex-mental-patient "cyber-dude" starts manipulating the cast with his Virtual Reality powers and bank of low-tech TV's (hmmm, sounds like the plot of an old Monkees episode). Meanwhile, Leary's sexy missus (Carmen Burcea) is schtupping the hotel staff and plans to steal her hubbie's Energy Papers—even if she has to murder the guy (as if this movie hadn't already killed his acting career). Not ridiculous enough for you? Did I forget to mention that at any given moment, Leary suddenly breaks out of character and yells "Cut!" when a scene isn't working? Then he might chat with the crew, give advice to his co-stars, or talk to real-life wife, Barbara. Sure, it's all a goof, but it's also the best reason to check out this otherwise idiotic snooze. Needless to add, Leary looks lost throughout (the fact that few of his Italian co-stars spoke English couldn't have helped), but the script gives him room to roam, such as when he makes reference to "my friend and teacher, Prof. Stanley Kubrick." Hard to believe, but craggy ol' Leary even plays the romantic lead, when a fetching young hotel employee drags him into bed and turns the plot into a February/December romance. Understandably dedicated to Ed Wood Jr., this pic fails at being a thriller, a drama, a sci-fi piece, whatever...Still, it's fun to see Leary working his LSD-ravaged charms to the max.

JABBERWALK [a.k.a. This is America, Crazy Ridiculous American People] (1976). Director Romano Vanderbes took the Mondo Movie to U.S. shores with this goofy shockumentary, which leapfrogs across the country, sucking up the most (supposedly) deviant niches of American culture, complete with a wonderfully condescending, Euro-snob narration. It kicks off with the casual weirdness of massage parlors, demolition derbies, naked female mud wrestling, and even fast food (these cretins seem shocked that Hot Dogs are made

out of ears, eyes, snouts and utters...Hell, that's why I buy the wretched things), then takes us to 1975's All-Bare America competition for some quick T&A. For equal opportunity, we get male dancers at a cocktail lounge in New Jersey, transporting average housewives into a "primitive ecstasy". All the while, the filmmakers try their damndest to prove that the U.S. has become "the most sexually explosive and permissive country in the world", even if they have to bend the truth, like boasting that Times Square sex-pics play to "virtually standing room audiences". The patronizing bullshit continues to a fever pitch (of laughter, that is) when they warn us that San Francisco has the highest percentage of "alcoholics and mental cases", show us the Poconos' "brothel" style rooms, while poor Las Vegas is called a modern Sodom and Gomorrah, where "1984 has already come true" (and even contains footage of our own recent wedding chapel, which they describe as a sleazy "shanty house"). Then add a Rent-a-Dungeon, a Black Mass and a Dildo Factory in hopes of pulling in the family audience. Despite plenty of R-rated genitalia, most of the people caught on this Jabberwalk (described as "a crazy, random trip") are so ugly (fat, middle-aged farts, scrawny whores, male dancers who look like Harry Reems' syphilitic cousin) that nothing in


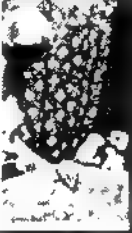
this film is a turn-on. Plus, nowadays it's difficult to think that a trip to Frederick's of Hollywood is provocative when there's one in every suburban mall. The same goes for a tattoo parlor, though admittedly, footage of a guy getting his dick tattooed was pretty racy in the '70s. Hideously dated (or just plain silly), this twisted time capsule has enough nostalgic sleaze to keep anyone amused.

BYE BYE MONKEY [Ciao Maschio] (1978). Never one to embrace the ordinary, Italian arthouse director Marco Ferreri went hog wild with this New York City-based oddity starring Gerard Depardieu (back in his early, more subversive years, before turning into a fat French joke). And if you thought Ferreri's *LA GRANDE BOUFFE* [SC#6] or *THE LAST WOMAN* were strange, he was simply warming up for this wrongheaded vision of America. The plot alone is enough to leave you queasy, with Depardieu playing a French cad (a big stretch, eh?) who works with a troupe of half-baked radical feminists (isn't that redundant?) who feels they can't effectively argue against rape until they've actually experienced the act firsthand. Later, he runs into eccentric old fart Marcello Mastroianni, who, while roaming Lower Manhattan, stumbles across a giant (fake) ape lying dead near the Hudson at the foot of the World Trade Center (shades of Dino DeLa's *KING KONG*!), with a baby chimpanzee buried in its fur. And it's no surprise when Depardieu adopts the cute lil' hairball, since they

"A Mondo Cane, American style. Funny, reckless...underbelly view of the U.S.A. ought to tickle hell out of everyone." - PLAYBOY

JABBERWALK

SHOWS WHAT AMERICA IS INTO TODAY!

SEE: "Massage Parlor Rip Offs"

SEE: "Rent A Dungeon"

SEE: "The Black Mass"

SEE: "Boy Go-Go Dancers"

SEE: "Adult Sex Clinics"

SEE: "Underground Sex Clinics"

SEE: "Nevada's Fly in Borden"

SEE: "Mudwrestling Schoolgirls"

SEE: "Miss All-Bare America"

SEE: "New Cood Prisons"



SEE: "Golden Gate Saloons"

SEE: "Drive-In Funeral Homes"


SEE: "Cryonics Practice"

SEE: "Eros Awards" Underground Academy Awards for "X" pics

AND... many more truly shocking and bizarre subjects!

Produced, Written and Directed by Romano Vanderbes with Elean Harris, Robert Campbell, Victor Zimet, Emanuel Vardi, Norman Rose & Distributed by ITM Releasing Co. Eastmancolor

SOME SCENES MAY BE TOO SHOCKING FOR CHILDREN 

almost look like father 'n' son. The plot continues to spin uncontrollably for the first two-thirds, then picks up when girlfriend Gail Lawrence gets pregnant, Gerard is left alone with his monkey, and everybody's life descends into the crapper. To be honest, I don't have a clue what the hell Ferreri is trying to say, except for a few vague gestures about humanity. Modern society is on the precipice of self-ruin, the younger characters are lost and deluded, the older ones are weird and forgotten, and everybody within camera range is a total freak. Meanwhile, Depardieu puts his dignity (and limited knowledge of English) on the line with snappy dialogue like "Ma munkee iz dead".

The odd supporting cast features James Coco as the owner of an Imperial Rome Wax Museum, and 64-year-old Geraldine Fitzgerald gets felt-up by Gerard at a party (the fact he does it without flinching proves his acting ability). Despite copious nudity from the gorgeous Ms. Lawrence (MANIAC) and the lumpen Depardieu (ugh...), little is erotic. And although loaded with wild imagery (a giant ape head laying alone in the middle of the beach, a wax museum aflame), when it comes to telling a story, Ferreri seems lost without a compass. So once again, we get a bunch of pretentious foreigners who come to NYC and make an absurd Lobster Epic that never gets a release in the States. God bless their wrongheaded souls.

ORIGINAL SINS (1994). Co-auteurs Matthew Howe and Howard Berger have pulled off a near miracle, creating an indie feature that's fueled with ingenious ideas, loads of nudity, and (best of all) savage commentary on religious fanaticism. In comparison to the usual video vomit, it's a shot of deviant adrenaline, complete with the balls to back up its sacrilegious conceit. Cheryl Clifford, Angelique de Rochembeau and Faustina star as a trio of Catholic girls who spend too much time groveling to cheap Jesus statues. All their "Bible bullshit" gets pureed when these goody-two-shoes have a vision of a naked Jesus standing in a field, they pass out, and reawaken six hours later to the discovery that they were all raped. Yes, kids, they've all been screwed by Jesus, or someone (or thing?) posing as the cut-rate savior. Deeply rooted in all those old Catholic-schoolgirl-turned-nymphofantasies, the first side effect of their violation is a tendency to spontaneously orgasm en masse. Then these gals get even nuttier, whether they're dressing in sack cloth, hearing voices, or confusing a door-to-door "Save the Whales" solicitor for Jesus (so they gang fuck him, of course). And if you think some of the plot twists, like incest, suicide and screwing a comatose girl are distasteful, watch until our batty chicks take time out from their prayers to crucify a guy and eat him. In the face of so many sleazy plot twists, the starring trio are terrific—and it's rare to find fresh new actresses so committed to their tawdry roles. Meanwhile, one of the goofiest subplots has the neighborhood's brain-dead punk band evoking a demon called Kaps. Played hilariously by Scooter McCrae (director of SHATTER DEAD), Kaps crawls out of a cheap mock-up of a corpse's beaver, complete with horns, wiggly tail, and a pissy attitude that keeps him twitching, swearing

and even buttfucking a minister! Though the story loses all semblance of reality long before the end credits, this ultra-sleazy pic also contains heavy duty subtext at how religious fervor can screw up your head. I can only imagine what type of force-fed church upbringing Howe & Berger had in order to come up with this tripped-out marvel.

STARCRASH (1978). Even if Luigi Cozzi lacks every conceivable filmmaking finesse (and once again, uses his Anglo-pseudonym, Lewis Coates), you gotta love the guy for his ability to cannibalize other pics, lace it with trash, and create a truly half-assed delight. For

proof, witness his witless Lou Ferrigno HERCULES duet, and this lovable STAR WARS rip-off. The primary reason to check it out is, of course, the sultry Caroline Munro (MANIAC, CAPTAIN KRONOS VAMP RE HUNTER) starring as the barely-dressed Stella Star—a blatant Barbarella-clone who's wanted by every robot cop in the galaxy for smuggling (and just plain wanted by everyone else). The rest of the cast includes ex-kid-evangelist Margoe Gortner (sporting his finest Mr. Brady perm), slumming Christopher Plummer as the Emperor of the Universe (but in his cheap regal armor, looking more like Emperor of Christopher Street), and even poor Joe Spinnell doing a goateed, Ming the Merciless routine as the egotistical Count Zarth Am (who, as the League of Darkness leader, rides around in a spaceship shaped like a clutching claw). The visual effects are indescribable (wouldya believe, the stars are lit up in various prime colors, like Xmas lights?), the costume are pure latex, and even a slow eight-year-old wouldn't get suckered in by this horseshit. Still, I kept at it for Munro, though her character is nothing but a Charley's Angel of the future, complete with a black space-bikini and hip boots. Unfortunately, she's stuck in a dreary secret mission to stop Spinnell and save the Emperor's son. Accompanied by a robot who looks like a walking dildo and speaks with a Texas twang, Stella visits a planet of half-nekkid Amazons, is trapped on an ice planet, and gets rescued by a pre-KNIGHTRIDER David Hasselhoff (looking quite poofy with all that eye-liner). When you come right

down to it, Stella is just a cheapjack, intergalactic tease romping about the galaxy in little more than a see-thru spacesuit. And though Munro is an undeniable knockout, she's stuck in a movie with all the artistry of an episode of JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS IN OUTER SPACE. This dime-store Euroreck makes the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers look like Edward Albee.

CAPTIVE WILD WOMAN (1943). You gotta love Universal horror flicks from the '40s. Because after riding high throughout the '30s with prime-grade monster-ramas, by the following decade they'd used up all their best ideas, tossed their most popular fiends into Abbott & Costello movies, and were scrambling for a new franchise—no matter how idiotic. Here's a perfect example, complete with unrequited, inter-species amore. John Carradine stars as Dr. Sigmund Walters, a suave (but sinister... this is Carradine, after all) physician who runs



dodgy endocrinology experiments in his secret laboratory. First, he steals a recently-imported female ape named Cheela from the local circus, then he injects the creature with glandular secretions from one of his unwilling female donors, and finally implants a full cerebrum from his expendable nurse. Voila! Through the miracles of scientific hokum (and cheesy time-lapse photography), Cheela is transformed into an exotic beauty played by Burnu Acquafredda. When Carradine takes his new mute protégé back to the circus, she gets the hots for her old trainer (Milburn Stone, best known for his long stint on GUNSMOKE as Doc), hypnotizes the big cats with one gaze (a little known power inherent in monkeys, I guess), and gets a job there, complete with a skimpy little costume. But the moment she gets jealous of Stone's blonde beau, her genetics go haywire and she de-evolves into a hairy ape girl (but looking more like The Wolfman's kid sister). Meanwhile, Carradine gets to blithely kill supporting slob, the natty ape suit is a Halloween reject, and nearly half of the 61 minute running time is padded with stock circus footage of lions 'n' tigers. With workmanlike direction from Edward Dmytryk (long before CROSSFIRE, THE CAPE NEMUTINY and McCarthy's blacklisting) and a deliriously goofy concept. This laff riot was even followed up by two dull sequels, JUNGLE WOMAN and JUNGLE CAPTIVE.

EXPRESSO BONGO (1958). This U.K. flick is a total gas! After its rockin' opening credits (sprayed across neon lights, pinball machines and cafe menus) we dive headfirst into the London of the late '50s—a world of hot jazz, cool cats and so many grungy, Beat Cappuccino joints that you'll get the controllable urge to torch a Starbucks. This flick might be well known on its home turf, but in the States, it's a lost b&w gem (still unavailable on video) that captures the rush of the era, while wallowing in cynicism and nightlife atmosphere. Even the critics raved, probably due to the presence of a heavy hitter like Laurence Harvey who gave it the artistic credentials that similar pics (like BEAT GIRL) lacked. Harvey stars as Johnny Jackson, the type of enterprising, fast-talker who always has an open mouth and an empty wallet. When he isn't hanging 'round cut-rate burlesque clubs, he's searching for a new scheme to make a buck off of someone else. In this case, it's Cliff Richard as a teenaged singer who sends the local gals swooning when he "strangles the vocal chords". Even though Cliff only plays the Soho coffeehouses for "kicks", Harvey takes the working class kid under his wing, changes his name to Bongo Herbert, promotes him with the description "a chip on your shoulder, an H-Bomb in your pants", and only takes 50% of his income in return. Nice guy, eh? And when Bongo's "Voice in the Wilderness" hits the charts, we're spun into the dog-eat-dog record biz, where the record-buying public is treated like dummies, musicians are pawns, and if you turn your back for an instant, your bones'll be picked clean. Cliff is believable as a Teddy Boy (if a tad heavy on the hairspray), especially when getting sucked into the hilarious Bongo Phenomenon and making time with a washed-up Stateside songstress. Working from a play by Wolf Mankowitz and Julian Moore, director Val Guest (THE DAY THE EARTH CAUGHT FIRE),

never lets the story get saccharine, while Harvey keeps his charismatic shitheel routine going at full throttle, even being an asshole to his long-suffering girlfriend (who works as a two-bit exotic dancer). Though we've seen it all before—the lowdown agent, the fresh new talent, the ignored girlfriend—this flick's keen eye and sharp wit keeps it fresh, nearly four decades later.

ALL NIGHT LONG [a.k.a. Night People] (1961). Table it, Daddy-O! A swingin' OTHELLO set in pre-Mod '60s London, Basil Dearden's ALL NIGHT LONG was a hip highlight of Film Forum's "British Noir" series last fall. Patrick McGeehan is funny and creepy as an ambitious jazz drummer on the make, Johnny Cousin i.e. Iago. As Richard Attenborough's underground jazz joint gears up to swing (with Charles Mingus and Dave Brubeck sitting in), Iago/Cousin sets his sights on the ex-band singer who can jump-start his career, but she's married to our Othello, a successful black band leader (Count? Duke? Works for me). Using sneaky tactics with audio tape that predates Watergate by over a decade, screenwriter W.D. (BUCKAROO BANZAI) Richter's reworking of the classic plot is still fresh and exciting, aided by cool and functional camerawork and sets. Needless to say, for fans of "cool" jazz, the sharp suits, thin ties, and modal chops deliver. And although the "hepcat" lingo will amuse you, the cast handles the task of '60s Shakespeare with soul and smarts. And just to hear a pre-imprisoned McGeehan say "Be seeing you" brings a smile. —Tavis Riker

HOLLYWOOD MAN [a.k.a. Death Threat, No One Cries Forever] (1976). When it came to '70s grindhouse/drive-in stardom, there were two kingpins who actually looked like they could win an off-screen barroom brawl—Fred Williamson and William Smith. Well, now that The Hammer is getting fresh press, it's about time Smith's contribution to low-brow cinema was acknowledged, because this guy has done it all. From a plethora of biker flicks, to

classics like INVASION OF THE BEE GIRLS and GRAVE OF THE VAMPIRE. But without doubt, this labor of love is his most unorthodox movie, co-produced and co-scripted by Smith, with direction by Jack Starrett, who earlier featured William in cycle-fests like THE LOSERS and RUN, ANGEL, RUN! [SC#5]. Smith stars as Rafe Stoker, a popular action movie hero who wants to direct and star in his own biker movie for a change. Unfortunately, the studio shitheels who made so much money off his earlier pics won't finance him, so he asks the Mob for backing. Not too bright, Rafe, because in order to get the syndicate dough, he first has to put up all of his personal assets as collateral. Accordingly, the Mob sends in a fixer to sabotage the production so the bosses can milk Rafe dry. So essentially, this is a biker movie within a mob movie about making movies. Brilliant! Even if the Mob storyline is hackneyed, the concept is so inspired that I fell for it completely. As films-about-filmmaking go, this is THE STUNTMAN of dime-store exploitation pics. Giving us a (semi)believable look at the hardships of making a low-grade chopper flick (a subject Smith has plenty of knowledge about), including no money, no time, bad weather, and bitchy help. It even gets self-



reflexive when Smith is arrested and remarks that the situation is like "playing a bad scene in a B-movie". Smith remains surprisingly low-key throughout, and only at the very end gets sufficiently pissed off and takes on the psycho hitman single-handedly. There's solid support from Don Stroud (*ANGELS UNCHAINED*) as a cocky stuntman, and though Mary Woronov (misspelled "Waronov" in the opening credits) doesn't get much to do as Smith's very personal assistant, she looks terrific. Complete with a ballsy, bummer of a denouement, this barely-released pic is a good bet for viewers looking for more than the usual Z-grade horseshit.

GIRLY [a.k.a. Mumsy, Nanny, Sonny and Girly] (1970). Freddie Francis has had a diverse career in the movies. On one side, he's a top-notch cinematographer with highbrow fare like *THE INNOCENTS* and Lynch's *THE ELEPHANT MAN* on his resume. But when he took the directors chair, he cranked out prime U.K. schlock—from *EVILOF FRANKENSTEIN* and Nilsson's *SON OF DRACULA* [SC#7], to this twisted family affair. The plot is simple: A close-knit family of upper-crust psychos lives in their seedy mansion and lures disposable undesirables to their deaths. First, the two youngest (Girly & Sonny) ply their potential victims with booze (as well as Girly's leggy charms), then the pair sucks them into their childish, but deadly games. Girly likes to chop the heads off her dolls; both her and Sonny sleep in oversized cribs; Mumsy lures new guests into her bed, hoping to prove they're "Big Boys"; and if anyone tries to escape, they're "sent to the Angels". The first half hour is a great intro to 'em all, but it moves onto shakier ground when the kids meet a rich fart, murder his girlfriend, adopt him into their wacko household, and force him to wear a School Jacket—until he takes control of their games by pitting Mumsy and Girly against each other for his sexual favors. At its best, the film is fueled by a sick, comic edge, some tawdry sexuality and Girly's allure, with Vanessa Howard stealing the show as the child-like blonde minx, bouncing about in her mini-skirted, schoolgirl attire and blithely killing strangers (of course, this sweet young thing is also dumb as a stump). Unfortunately, Francis never lets his surprisingly graceless movie rip loose in any dangerous directions (a la *SPIDER BABY*) or even wallow in gratuitous skin 'n' sleaze, leading to plenty of dead air along the way. Despite its deficits, when it comes to U.K. fare, I'd still rather watch this kill-happy houseful of deviants than any chunk of nicely-dressed cheese from James Ivory.

GODZILLA VS. SPACE GODZILLA (1994). It's always cool to see a new Godzilla flick (even though they never make it to U.S. shores, outside of bootleg sources). On the downside, these '90s entries have taken the same progression they did in the '60s, by transforming our atomic-breathed city-smasher into a mankind-protecting dogooder. Bleah! Even worse, in this installment, they resurrect the dreaded Baby Godzilla! The dopiness begins when the government uses telepathy to stop Godzilla from stomping their cities to a scrapple-like consistency, by enlisting the aid of a cute psychic—who also gets a message from Mothra's pair of mini-pixies, warning her

that a Space Monster is heading toward the earth to battle Godzilla for domination of the planet. Meanwhile, bumbling explorers stumble across the vomitably-adorable Baby Godzilla, who looks like the Giant Behemoth equivalent of those Big-Eyed Clown paintings (I wouldn't be surprised if Sid 'n' Marty Krofft designed the wretched thing, and had Billy Barty zipped up inside it). In addition, the government has built a flying, robot Godzilla (dubbed Mogera) that they pop into the cosmos to stop the approaching threat—which looks like a scaly Godzilla-clone, albeit with a couple huge white crystals growing outta its shoulder blades. No question, this is too plot-heavy for viewers in search of rampant destruction, and even the monster suit is looking rubbery. Plus, with those Carnie Wilson-thighs, this Godzilla's in serious need of liposuction (dangerous, of course, since the bi-product could submerge Tokyo). And threatening? Nope. At least things pick up in the final half-hour, when our Space Godzilla hits earth, with Godzilla Sr. & Jr. battling this alien foe,

as the human population flees like rats. And thank goodness all of this Monster Mayhem takes place in Japan, because if these gigantic carcasses were sprawled across Manhattan, it'd take the Sanitation Department a decade before they cleaned 'em up. Low on imagination and elegance, with (barely) serviceable direction from Kensho Yamashita, this has to be racked up as a disappointment, even for diehard fans.

GAMERA: THE GUARDIAN OF THE UNIVERSE (1994). Since Toho has been regularly cranking out the new Godzilla pics, it's no surprise that Daiiei Studio has gotten their ass in gear and given a long-overdue facelift to their copyrighted critter, Gamera. Better still, they do it right! First, they hire a semi-arthouse director, Shusuke Kaneko (*SUMMER VACATION*: 1999), to give it a fresh coat of finesse. Then they give him a decent budget. The result is a surprisingly serious movie (considering it stars a 60 meter long, fire-breathing, atomic turtle who spins 'cross the skies like a jet-powered Frisbee), and a welcome change from the half-baked juvenilia we came to expect from the series in the '60s. The drama begins when a shipload of Plutonium is grounded at sea by a mysterious "drifting atoll". Elsewhere,

an island village is destroyed by a strange "bird", complete with an unusually large lump of animal feces containing human remains. The answer? Any self-respected monster movie addict will tell you that Gamera is back at large, as well as a trio of bat-winged man-eaters based on G's old foe, Gyaos. But when the military fails at trapping all of the Gyaos in a domed stadium, Gamera rises from the sea to finish the job. And despite his high-falutin' Guardian of the Universe title, this titanic turtle doesn't give a damn about property values as he waddles through the city. The effects are cool, especially the moments when Gamera shoots his Atomic Bad Breath 'cross the sky, exploding the Gyaos like a head outta *SCANNERS*. Better still, the balls-out finale has the two creatures barreling through urban corridors, with Kaneko capturing it with a modern, high(er)-tech perspective that old fans won't believe. This isn't just two sweaty stuntman in rubber suits, beating each other to a pulp amidst Lego miniatures—instead, the last half hour has most of Tokyo turned to rubble and ash



by these two behemoths. Yeah! Now, if only they could update the human dimensions of the story to match. Nevertheless, this kickass entry blows away all recent Godzilla fare, and gives new hope for the future of Giant Monster Mayhem.

BLACK GUNN (1972). In the early days of blaxploitation, football great Jim Brown was one of its first superstars, combining muscles and class into a two-fisted, charismatic leading man. In the '60s, studios tried to turn Brown into a crossover commodity with roles in *THE DIRTY DOZEN* and *ICE STATION ZEBRA*. But by the '70s, he was lending her persona to more grindhouse-destined fare, like *SLAUGHTER*, *THREE THE HARD WAY* and this funky little yarn. The plot is set in motion when a Mob-run bookie joint is ripped off by a bunch of masked Brothers (discontented Nam vets who are "takin' it to The Man"). Enter Jim, who plays the filthy rich owner of Gunn's Club—a swanky L.A. nightclub for the black cognoscenti. Things begin to simmer when Gunn's brother Scotty shows up after the heist, loaded with the stolen cash as well as the syndicate's Pay-Off Journals, which sends a barrage of hitmen after the "spook" perpetrators and has the city's corrupt politicians shifting their pants. But it's not until Scotty gets rubbed out and left on Gunn's doorstep one morning that our hero blows a gasket and takes the law into his own hands (with the aid of some new Black Panther-esque pals). Sure, the story is cheesy and director Robert Hartford-Davis (*THE BLOODSUCKERS*) is a total hack, but the flick makes up for it with a tough veneer, eye-popping fashions (check out Gunn's red and black tux!), and loads of whacked supporting actors. We get throwaway appearances from sports pals Deacon Jones and Vida Blue; babes Brenda Sykes and Luciana Paluzzi; and Bernie Casey (*DR. BLACK AND MR. HYDE*) as a maxi-afro'd militant. Martin Landau even turns up as gangster Riff Capelli, and as if being a sadistic mob boss wasn't a sleazy enough occupation, he's also a *used cars salesman* to boot! Then

there's Bruce Glover, playing one of the craziest honky weasels in Deuce history—threatening to send one Brother to "the great Watermelon Patch in the sky" and proving he's twice as nuts as his son, Crispin. Meanwhile, Jim is so fucking cool that you can ignore the fact that nobody north of 110th Street should give a rat's ass about his pampered, mansioned lifestyle. And when was the last time you saw a high speed chase featuring a white Rolls Royce? It's these touches that make this otherwise predictable actioner worth searching out.

FEARLESS FRANK [a.k.a. Frank's Greatest Adventure] (1967). If you look hard enough, every bigshot Hollywood director has (at least) one early, indulgent piece of crap under their belt. For example, take this goofy fantasy/superhero satire, which was directed by Philip Kaufman, 15 years before *THE RIGHT STUFF*. The fact it's also the celluloid debut of Jon Voight only adds to the fun. Filmed in '64, shown at Cannes in '67, and (barely) released in '69 to cash in on Voight's *MIDNIGHT COWBOY* fame, there's no question this is a mess. But under its crude satire, you can see the ghost of '60s guerrilla filmmaking. A young, exceptionally geeky Voight stars as Frank, a young, exceptionally geeky farmboy who leaves his rural

hovel for adventures in the "Big City". The moment Frank hits Chicago, he falls for Plethora (Monique Van Vooren), a mobster's cleavage-heavy, runaway moll. Unfortunately, Plethora is quickly whisked away by the mob boss' henchmen and, for all his good will, Frank is shot and left for dead. The pic gets *really* weird at this point, when Frank is rescued by The Good Doctor (Severn Darden), who uses the guy as a guinea pig for his half-baked experiments—transforming Voight into a bullet-proofed "force for good", sticking him in a cheap suit, and having him fly about town. Meanwhile, all of the crooks are Dick Tracy-style goofballs, including Screw-nose, The Cat and The Rat (comedian David Steinberg with a fake mustache).

More importantly, the cigar-chomping Boss has his own mad scientist, Claude (also played by Darden), who creates an equally-superhuman duplicate they dub "False Frank" and send to destroy our real (but increasingly cocky) hero. It gets increasingly dippy from here on, but at least Voight has a ball with the dual role, especially when he gets to battle himself atop a roller coaster and even punch out a lady in a bar. All the while, this asinine romp feels more like an extended SCTV skit than a genuine movie, but it's also so unfathomably earnest that you can only wonder what Kaufman and his crew were smoking at the time. A bizarre and mercifully brief curiosity.

THE RAPEMAN (1997). Here's a charming title for a movie. And would you believe, he's the *hero*? Yes, it's another grm entry into New Japanese Exploitation, based on a popular (and obviously un-P.C.) Manga. We get the point in the first few minutes, when a beautiful gold-digger refuses to bed her long-time beau and dumps him. Once home, an intruder dressed in a leather jacket and a black hockey mask repels down the side of her high-rise, crashes through her window, tears off her clothes, tapes over her mouth, and (in slo-mo, no less) rapes the woman ("I have a gift...from the list of guys you bankrupted."). Of course, after one encounter with Rapeman, they're turned into docile (re: Good) girls who plead

"Gimme more" to their violator—making this the ultimate in misogynistic rape fantasies. Still, it's pretty compelling trash, and considering the dicey subject matter, director Takao Nagaishi transforms this repellent idea into a slick mix of *BATMAN* and *TWO MOON JUNCTION*. By day, Rapeman works as a high school teacher (complete with Clark Kent-like glasses) but, in his spare time, heads up Rapeman Services—an undercover business that screws women who have spent their lives screwing others. Even though all of their hard-earned income is given to a bankrupt orphanage, it's difficult to forget that the guy's job description consists of pile-driving unsuspecting (albeit evil) women, under the motto "Righting Wrongs Through Penetration." Rapeman's latest case involves a politician's scheming missus, who needs to be taught a lesson by raping her (who the hell wrote this script, Pat Buchanan?). But after the fact, it turns out to be a set-up by the local Yakuza, to force the candidate out of the election. Then, after his partner-in-abuse Uncle gets the shit kicked outta him, it's up to Rapeman to take on the Mob, meet a lovely photojournalist, and expose the town's crooked politicians. Clocking in at a whopping 75 minutes, this is a cool, cruel field day, with enough kinkiness to keep even hardcore deviants amused.

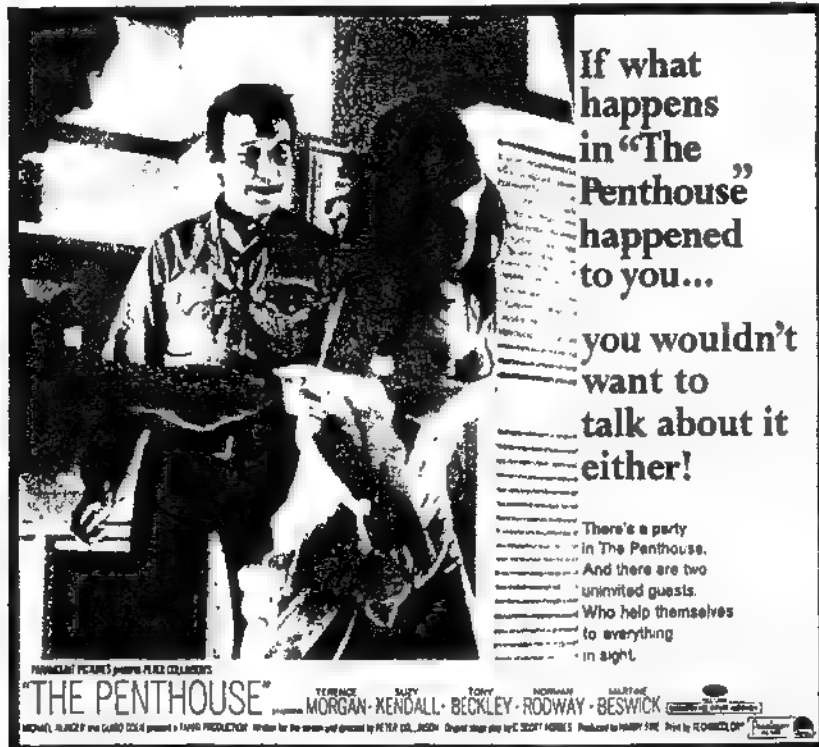


THE PENTHOUSE (1967). This brutal British psycho-drama gave the under-rated Peter Collinson (THE ITALIAN JOB) his first directing gig, and although severely dated three decades later, it's helped by a pitch black sense of humor mixed with the sadism. Our two leads consist of a boorish adulterer named Bruce (Terence Morgan) and his dirty-blond mistress (Suzy Kendall, a long-time looker in flicks such as BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE and TORSO), who are shacking up in a swanky (nearly empty) high-rise. Barely into the first reel, the script wisely bypasses all that unnecessary character development when a pair of unhinged thugs (Tony Beckley and Norman Rodway) invade the flat posing as Gas Men—pulling knives on the couple, closing the curtains and letting the "party" begin. Soon Bruce is tied up in an easy chair and ridiculed, while sexy Suzy takes the alternate route of getting liquored up and stoned out of her mind (and eventually, her clothes) with the intruders. Be warned though: If you're looking for harsh thrills, this film rings totally false, with less visceral impact than you'd expect from the skanky plot. That aside, Collinson pulls it all off with a fair amount of style, and though this loon-fest only has five characters and all takes place in one enclosed space (no surprise, it's based on a play), he makes the best of its claustrophobic potential. I'm not surprised the flick disappeared

courtesy of Redemption Video. It's no wonder Clive took so long to release them to the public—he was simply waiting until he was revered enough that they couldn't damage his cash-cow career. Filmed on spare change, with all his pals lending a hand, this duet proves that even back then, Barker was indulgent beyond his years. SALOME is a highly experimental, 18-minute retelling of the of Salome/John the Baptist tale, which reminds me of any number of pretentious Production 101 shorts I've had the "pleasure" to sit through during my college years. Salome's dance looks like a Deadhead flashback, a pre-Pinhead Doug Bradley plays Herod, and the druggy cinematography offers some odd imagery amidst the incoherence. At least THE FORBIDDEN is a luridly ecstatic tale that's easier to enjoy. On the other hand, after only 5 minutes you wanna sucker punch the 'genius' who chose to print so much of the pic in eyesore-inducing negative. Sure, it can be effective in small doses, but this is fucking ridiculous! Meanwhile, the Faustian storyline is more concerned with wringing maximum style out of its paltry budget (rather than tell a simple story), as an imprisoned Peter Atkins tears apart a puzzle-picture and unleashes a passel of demons. Still, there are some effective tidbits burrowed amidst the 36-minute running time. In particular, a delightfully gruesome skin-removal sequence, where the lead is methodically sliced from head to toe by "angels", then slowly peeled like a bloody grape. All of a sudden, we're not laughing anyone, as this abruptly turns into a five-course feast for horror fanatics. Now if only the rest of the movie weren't as dumb, such as Barker's hilarious, on-screen appearance as a dancing, butt-naked demon, complete with a raging hard-on. A message to Clive: Although I admire your youthful chutzpah, please stay *behind* the camera from now on.

WILD BEASTS (1983). I can't get enough of Franco Prosperi. In collaboration with Gualtiero Jacopetti, we got the seminal duet of MONDO CANE 1 & 2 and the kickass FAREWELL, UNCLE TOM [SC#6]. In the '80s, Prosperi was still waist-deep in cinematic muck (albeit solo this time 'round), with this fictional slaughter-fest of crazed zoo animals running amok. Unfortunately, although Prosperi is one of the granddaddies of real-life, gross-out cinema, he doesn't know jack about developing characters and keeping a narrative rolling. Instead, he went straight for the throat with this carnage-packed tale. Only 10 minutes in the movie, we notice that local animals are becoming squirrely, with the city's rat population getting so uppity that they pour out of the sewers and tear apart humans (not to mention, a very confused kitty). While most spineless U.S. directors would wait a while before playing their trump cards, Prosperi has all hell break loose in the first reel. Alright! All the zoo animals suddenly go spastic,

smash through their cages and run wild in the city, complete with loads of up-close flesh-rendering, like when lions blithely munch on human guts or a Seeing Eye Dog tears away at his blind master. Meanwhile, the police incinerate the rats with blowtorches (all they forgot were the marshmallows), but are clueless when it comes to bigger game, like a stampede of head-crushing elephants. Why are the creatures going nuts? Are they sick of being treated like pets? Nope, they're all just tripping out from the Angel Dust put in their water supply, which leads to plenty surreal shit, including a cheetah in a high speed chase after a Volkswagon, a herd of elephants invading an airport runway, and a tiger on the subway. Better still, wait until a bunch of ugly li'l grade school kids get a taste of the PCP-tainted water! This flick is great! And though crude, it's outrageous enough to keep you smiling thanks to its city-wide panic, unapologetic slaughter, and cast of gorgeous animals. Further proof that Prosperi really knows how to keep sleaze-hungry fans salivating for more.



without a trace after its first release, because it was far too twisted for moviegoers more used to seeing Ms. Kendall in squeaky-clean fare like TO SIR, WITH LOVE. For example, when it isn't following the usual Terrorized Hostage routine, the psychos ham it up with some hilariously prissy banter, highlighted by Beckley's five minute monologue about Baby Alligators in the Sewers (nowadays, it's the type of rant that they'd give to Kevin Spacey). In the final 10 minutes, we even get a brief appearance from the sultry Martine Bestick (DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE), who adds a few cute twists to the waning shenanigans. All in all, an artificial li'l freak-out, but with just enough U.K. dementia to keep it amusing.

SALOME (1973) and THE FORBIDDEN (1975-78). Long before becoming a renowned horror renaissance man, Clive Barker was just a young schmuck on the dole, performing his plays and cranking out these two short, silent pics which have been released for the first time

PINK NARCISSUS (1971). This lush indie is essentially the father of today's New Queer Cinema. Because even if it sounds like just another raunchy gay sex fantasy with an all male cast, there's more going on under the sheets than simple jerking off. Sure, it's as hideously pretentious as any arthouse piece of tripe, but this zilch-budget pic (directed/written/photographed by Anonymous, supposedly over a seven-year period) gets points for mixing a raunchy Cocteau with Kenneth Anger Lite. The film opens on a fairy tale (no pun intended) landscape straight out of a Disney flick. Then we meet Bobby Kendall as a handsome young stud relaxing alone in his posh apartment, complete with diaphanous curtains and rococo furnishings. As he sprawls on his bed, masturbating, he takes a fantasy journey of self-exploration, beginning with an anonymous men's room encounter with a leather boy (a la FIREWORKS). After that, he's a bullfighter, taking on a charging motorcycle. Then followed by a trip to a woodland paradise, overlorded by hissy tyrants in silver jock straps—and with all these pouty young men you'd think was an extended Madonna video. But if you can survive the rampant silliness (or simply fast forward), the wildest bit is at the end, when we get our first glimpse of the decadent urban nightlife outside his apartment. Essentially, it's a gay acid dream of the old 42nd Street, with a street vendor selling a dildo to a priest, a "Groovy Humor" ice man advertising "Pissicles"; plus the usual ragged assortment of beggars, cripples, bag ladies, sailors, and bottomless construction workers. For those five minutes, I was on the floor, for once laughing *with* the film, instead of *at* it. Of course, it quickly resumes its leaden symbolism for the wrap-up, when Bobby (who spends most of the flick with his pants down around his ankles) accepts his sexuality and is sucked into the earth (?). Sumptuously photographed (especially for 8mm) and often hilariously voyeuristic, this half-baked dream-erotica is perfect holiday fare for the whole family—that is, if your family hangs out at the Crowbar.

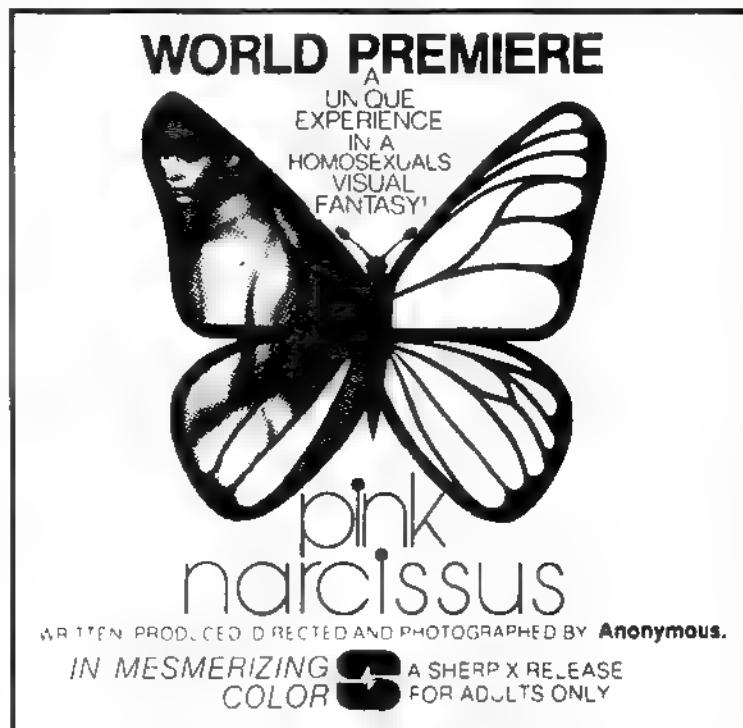
A NIGHT TO DISMEMBER (1986). With such mind-bending classics as *DOUBLE AGENT 73* and *LET ME DIE A WOMAN* under her directorial belt, Doris Wishman is indeed the queen of grindhouse weirdness. Even when forced to work with pocket change, her films had an uncommonly fetishistic drive behind 'em. If you think they don't make films like that anymore, Wishman is even now working on her latest pic, a sexploitation romp entitled *DILDO HEAVEN*. But let's get back to this horror pic, which is one of her most convoluted efforts (and if you're familiar with her work, you're probably reeling at the thought). Still, it harkens back to her earliest works in the fact it lacks any use of synch sound, has nary a competent actor in sight, and features a story so fragmented you'd almost believe it was some sort of gorgeously avant-garde satire. It begins when a detective fills us in on the bloodthirsty story of the Kent Family murders, and how, on October 15, this entire peaceable family suddenly went haywire. Amidst the cut-rate carnage, my fave is when an older sister chops up her younger sis with an ax, and then accidentally falls onto the

blade. Ooops. But most of the movie sticks with Vicki, recently released from the looney bin, who's still haunted by nightmarish visions and annoyed by asshole relatives who want to destroy what little sanity she has left. Hell, these people are so screwed-up and bloodthirsty they should get their own daytime talk show. Then the detective roams about the crime scenes, keeping the perplexed viewer informed about what the fuck is going on. Meanwhile, this pic is so under-budgeted that instead of using a real spread for a dinner

table scene, they could only afford a few slices of deli meat. And although the cheesy gore FX are plentiful (a human head run over by a car, a heart ripped from a guy's chest), it all reminds you of an old H.G. Lewis pic (except not as convincing). By the end, this pic left me dazed 'n' confused, becoming the cinematic equivalent of a faceful of nitrous oxide.

THE SWINGING CHEERLEADERS (1975). Director Jack Hill is a long-time SHOCK favorite. Because while most '70s exploitation fare featured spineless females, Hill's pics starred strong, independent women (who didn't mind popping their blouse, as long as there was solid motivation for it). Unfortunately, this is one of Hill's lamest, least original efforts. For readers who *didn't* spend the '70s at white trash

drive-ins, the Cheerleader Sex Flick had a short-lived popularity, thanks to lengthy shots of porn-pommed bimbos bouncing about and taking long hot showers. Oddly enough, this entry avoids all the crude T&A that gave birth to these pics in the first place—instead, it's as if Hill was trying to make the first socially-responsible cheerleader movie (now, *there's* a bright idea). At least Hill recruited a trio of sexploitation goddesses for the leads. There's Rosanne Katon (*THE MOTHERS*), Cheryl "Rainbeaux" Smith, who was a seasoned pro, with leads in *THE POM POM GIRLS* and *REVENGE OF THE CHEERLEADERS* (and is the only cast member who looks relatively college-aged); and bleach-blond Colleen Camp in her first film, whose career would range from top-billed swill like *THE SEDUCERS* [SC#4], to a dancing Playmate in *APOCALYPSE NOW*. Unfortunately, these lovely ladies are given little to do. The hackneyed story has a journalism major named Kate joining the Mesa State squad, with plans to write a muckraking term paper about the gals' sexcapades. But instead of getting the sleazy lowdown, this left-winger ends up enlightened—learning that these girls are *people*, not mindless nymphs (so this is technically science fiction?). The plot gets more convoluted when Kate's druggie ex-boyfriend gangbangs the virginal Rainbeaux, and after that, the point-shaving faculty kidnaps the quarterback so Mesa will lose the Big Game. If this was supposed to be comedy, where are the laughs? If it was supposed to be sexy, why is the script grounded in soap-opera banality? And although Hill's talent for jump-starting slop is sometimes evident (when a Prof's pissed-off wife confronts Katon with a switchblade, it's like Foxy Brown suddenly burst onto the set), it's not often enough for my discriminating tastes. Shot in a whopping 12 days, the result isn't raunchy enough to appease Sinema Slob, or weird enough to achieve the cult status of a Hill epic like *SWITCHBLADE SISTERS*.



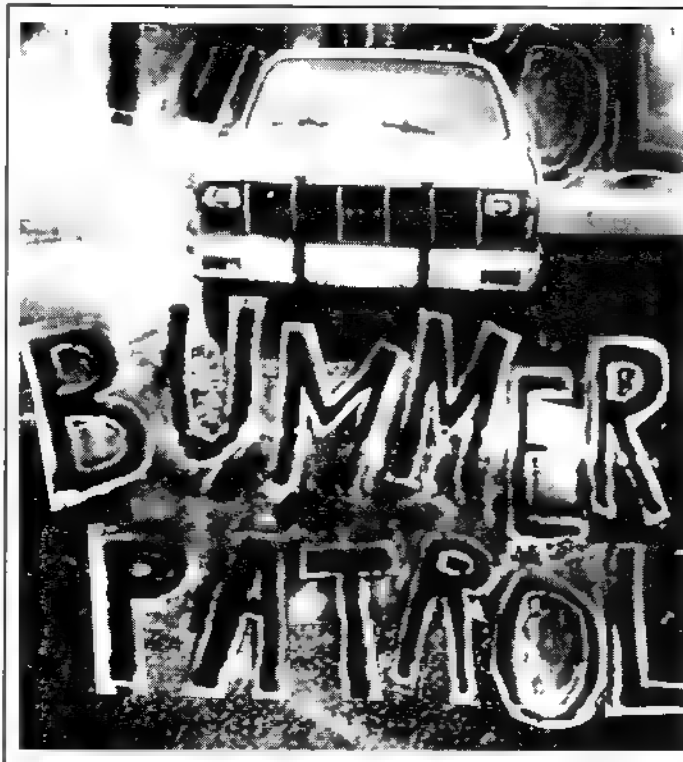
BELOVED INVADERS: THE VENTURES (1965). On the surface, this seems like just another HARD DAY'S NIGHT-clone, featuring the b&w, documentary-style adventures of a hot new band on tour throughout Japan. But this time we get The Ventures, one of the greatest (and most enduring) instrumental rock 'n' surf bands of that or any era. (For readers saying "Who?", just think "HAWAII 5-O Theme.") It's a shame this pic was never given a major release in the States, because these guys were fucking amazing in concert, with this cherished artifact capturing them at the top of their popularity. Meanwhile, director George M. Reid sucks us in with a kickass intro that seizes the era by the throat. First, a typical Japanese teenager plugs his yen into a jukebox and punches up the latest single from The Ventures, and while it plays, we're transported to an Asian record plant, with the crew mass-producing 78's—then straight to a store full of eager kids ravenously grabbing them up. After that, we get assorted Japanese Venture-wannabee bands jamming for their frantically boogieing, teenaged fans. The rest of the pic takes us on tour with the band, through Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo, and from the reaction these guys get, The Ventures (Don Wilson, Bob Bogle, Nokie Edwards, and drummer Mel Taylor) look like the Asian answer to The Beatles' first U.S. tour. As for myself, all I saw were four dorky white dudes roaming the streets, tasting fast food delicacies, and acting like typical tourists. But even if these guys are listless in between gigs, the moment they hit the stage, they're fucking gods. So ignore their traipsing about the Orient and revel in some of the most incredible concert footage of its time, including hits like "Slaughter on 10th Avenue", "Walk Don't Run", "Pipeline", and even (shudder) an instrumental "House of the Rising Sun." Their version of "Wipe Out" makes The Beatles look like they were on Laudanum, even if (off stage) the quartet has the combined charms of a man-hole cover. Most of the production credits are Japanese, and it's no surprise the pic never got a sizable stateside release, since (in typical, buttheaded fashion) the studio probably figured the setting was too alien for their white-bread U.S. fans. Nowadays, if you want an incredible blast from the past, don't pass it up!

INDEPENDENT ODDITIES: As far as I know, the 35-minute **DRAG** (Dementia Brothers Pictures, 6814 Crown Lane, Tinley Park, IL 60477-1736) has only been shown on the Convention Circuit. But despite its highly touted reviews (Stephen King the middle-class beacon of banality, raved about it), the fanboy contingent is exactly where this 35-minute snippet belongs. Basically, it's just another Living Dead-homage, with director Mark Pavia taking us down Deja Vu Avenue.

Set in a time and place when the Pasty-Faced Dead are taking over the planet again, Ellie Cahill stars as Victoria, a lone woman roaming the desolate countryside and beating the crap out of the local flesh-snackers, while trying to drag a fresh corpse cross country. Weak on script, but strong on visual allure, it ultimately shoots itself in the foot when our resourceful heroine suddenly turns into a sentimental half-wit in the name of love. Looking more like a product reel than a heartfelt short, any spark of imagination is thwarted in an effort not to

challenge the viewer. Like any Tinseltown tripe, it lacks the balls to make a lasting impression. Instead of the dreary, introspective swill that's pumped out as most college projects, **A CONVERSATION** (Alvin Ecarma, 10708 Barnwood Lane, Potomac, MD 20854) is loads of fun. Shot in 16mm, it begins like any New York City slice-of-lifer, with a longhaired street musician (Mark Evans) muscled by a leather-jacketed asshole (Mike Lafetra). Just as things look bleak, up pops The Badger ("Cash Flagg Jr"), a superhero vigilante in a ridiculous red & blue costume, ready to beat the bejesus out of this "vermin". But instead, the musician and the superhero have a brief sociological argument about violence begetting violence (even quoting Sophocles and Nietzsche), until finally giving into the joy of justified bloodshed. This is a near-perfect short film, even putting The Statler Brothers' "Flowers on the Wall" to better use than Tarantino did in PULP FICTION. All in all, a brilliant idea pulled off with subversive wit, while prompting more pure joy in only six minutes than any two hours of Hollywood-induced diarrhea. In the hilarious **BUMMER PATROL** (Jed Brain Pictures, 116 South 2nd Street #4, Brooklyn, NY 12211), the Jed Brain Rehab Center takes to the dingiest streets of Brooklyn in their low-tech patrol van, with Field Agents Eggman and Big Foot "aiding" people who're down on their luck and in need of some equally crazed company. Originally shown on NYC's public access Channel 69, it's great to have this on tape, so you can watch it over and over, in slack-jawed amazement. Essentially, this combines the technique of COPS with the I.Q. of CLERKS, except these guys 'n' gals are totally out of their fucking minds. For 100 minutes, we're treated to 11 different episodes—from going to Dunkin' Donuts with a spastic soldier from Fort Wayne, who they first encounter stumbling down the street, clutching a stuffed

bear. To riding the mean streets with corner whores, Angel Food Cake and Baby Fayce. Or (best of all) watching the perpetually zonked Big Foot chugging cold medicine and snorting a Butter-Flavored Pam aerosol cocktail. After this overload of highly addictive, stream-of-consciousness brilliance, we even get a preview for their upcoming feature, **AMERICAN BURNOUT**, which is sure to live up to its name. Though most readers have already gotten wind of **WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE FOOLING [the Story of a Robbery]** (Mike White, P.O. Box 2401, Riverview, MI 48192-7417; \$5), I wanted to give it a mention, for the record. By now, we all know that Quentin Tarantino borrowed very liberally from Ringo Lam's **CITY ON FIRE** in order to make **RESERVOIR DOGS**. But it was Mike White who first got this info disseminated to the general public, because instead of sitting on



his ass, like most of us, he made this 10-minute video that splices identical images from each pic, side by side, and lets viewers judge the similarities for themselves—sometimes even intercutting visuals from one, with audio from the other. In addition, you can tell White has a sense of humor, since his credits read "Starring Harvey Keitel as Danny Lee and Tim Roth as Chow Yun-Fat". Good for some laughs at Tarantino's expense (he's rich enough to take it), plus the video's only five lousy bucks, which barely pays for the postage

SCORE (1973). Back in the early '70s, when hardcore X-rated films were in their infancy, SCORE was one of the bigger hits from that era, playing Times Square forever and getting critical accolades from (then)cutting edge mags like Playboy and After Dark. The culprit behind it was none other than director Radley Metzger, who spent the '60s as the Fellini of softcore fare (CAMILLE 2000, THE LICKERISH QUARTET), before adopting the pseudonym Harry Paris in the '80s and creating master(bat)ion works like THE OPENING OF MISTY BEETHOVEN. This Yugoslavia-lensed pic fits snugly in betwixt those eras, before porn became synonymous with nameless, close-

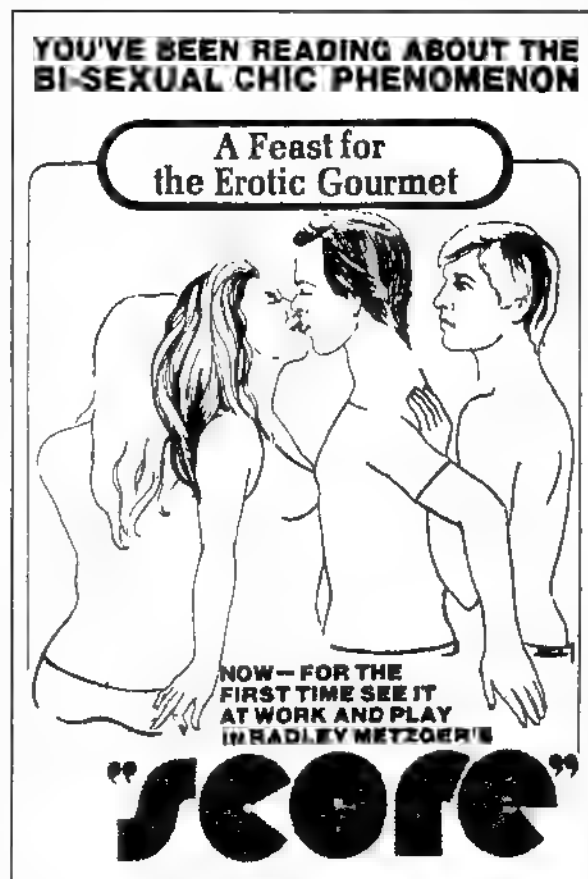
up schtupping. In addition, exploitation fans will recognize one of the leads as Lynn Lowry, a doe-eyed young actress best known for horror pics like THE CRAZIES and THEY CAME FROM WITHIN. This softcore comedy features a horny pair of swingers named Elvira and Jack (Claire Wilbur & Gerald Grant), who pull a naive young couple, Betsy and Eddie (Lowry & Calvin Culver) into their carefree, sensual world. After the sexual Svengalis loosen up the squares a bit, the four have a dinner party, get stoned and try on some costumes (Betsy puts on see-thru lingerie Elvira dresses like a nun, Cowboy Eddie looks like one of the Village People, while Jack romps about naked, but for a salor hat). Then they pair off into new couples. The twist? The ladies go upstairs together, while the guys pull out the downstairs' sofa-bed, with Metzger intercutting these two couples at work. Despite some stiff, theatrical dialogue (no surprise, since it's based on an Off-Broadway play by Jerry Douglas), Metzger achieves a nice erotic edge, with plenty of full nudity and foreplay. Sure, the characters can be a tad dim (in particular, Betsy's got the brain of a gnat), but it's, nevertheless, a quaint footnote on the sexual revolution. I only wonder how this pic would go over in today's narrow-minded culture, since most straight guys who'll sit through any DIRTY DEBS flick wouldn't be caught dead watching two men giving each other blow jobs. If nothing else, it's such a blatant advertisement for the aphrodisiac qualities of Amyl Nitrate, that I'm surprised moviegoers didn't start going through poppers like they were cocktail peanuts [Note: Don't get suckered into the trimmed Magnum Video version---get the uncut one from Audubon Film Library, P.O. 7883, New York, NY 10150-7883]

LIVING DEAD GIRL [La Morte Vivante] (1982). Jean Rollin's work has always left me a little cold, because although his sleazy li'l pics have a lush quality, he rarely seems to embrace his tawdry subject matter wholeheartedly. On the other hand, he doesn't seem focused enough to pull off a flick that doesn't rely on gratuitous tits 'n' gore. Happily, this is one of his more successful forays—an elegant little zombie pic that revels in cheap bloodletting and comely leads. It begins when a couple of dim-witted thieves break into a crypt and steal the jewels from a few dead broads. Unfortunately for them, a shitload of nearby nuclear waste is popped open thanks to a convenient earthquake, and as any good scientist knows, radioactivity can instantly bring the dead back to life. In this case, blonde cutie Catherine (Francoise Blanchard) rises from her casket and wins

automatic audience approval by poking out one of the thief's eyeballs in a flurry of (very fake) blood. The other simply gets his face half burnt away. Go, ghou! Soon Blondie is on the prowl in her funeral gown, returning to her old spacious home and encountering blood-bonded girlfriend Elaine (Marna Pierro). But even though poor dead Catherine can't stop slaughtering folks, Elaine still considers her a pal and covers up the ghastly murder—even allowing Cath to suck at her own arm to quench her uncontrollable "hunger" (so much for your always-welcome lesbian subtext). Things plod down when a female U.S. photobug takes a pic of Catherine and becomes obsessed with

proving that this Dead Girl is back on her feet, but Rollin pulls it back together whenever he focuses on the lead duo. And if you want excessive gore, look no further, because Rollin pulls the cork outta the dike in this yam, with shredded flesh, lengthy dining sequences, and splatter highlights (such as when a guy gets a chunk ripped out of his neck and gushes so much blood onto his date that it looks like a Monty Python skit). It all adds up to a blood-caked yarn featuring two knockout Euro-babes who dive face-first into their sloppy roles. It's about as good as this crap gets.

THE \$6,000.00 NIGGER [a.k.a. Super Soul Brother] (1978). How can you pass up a flick with a title like this? The fact is, you'll need a case of St. Ides to make it through this Miami-lensed, below-gutter-level blaxploitation, courtesy of director Rene Martinez (THE GUY FROM HARLEM). Essentially, we get THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN crossed with DOLEMITE, then shot on a Richard Kern-level budget. But despite that terrifically goofy premise, even the most stoned schlock addicts will find this difficult to endure, as it showcases



the (debatable) talents of comic Wildman Steve. The stupidity begins when a tubby scientist named Dr. Dippy needs a human guinea pig in order to justify his unorthodox research to his sleazy backers (who've already laid out a whopping six grand). Since they wouldn't dare dabble in human experimentation, they grab Wildman Steve off the street instead—playing a wino who's perpetually beaten by neighborhood thugs. Before any real fun begins, he's set up in a swanky apartment complete with a hooker (who gets the supreme pleasure of washing Wildman's butt). Later, he even schtupps Dippy's "fine sexy mama" virgin nurse (Joycelyn Norris). With all this padding out of the way, Steve gets a highly experimental shot, and suddenly acquires super powers that allow him to bend iron bars, beat up old enemies, bounce bullets off his flabby gut, and (at long last) keep the viewer halfway awake. Unfortunately, the budget is so painfully low that once Steve gets his powers, they can't afford to have him do much, outside of getting conned into stealing a jewelry store safe. Plus, if he doesn't get a neutralizer into his system, he's gonna croak. To put it delicately, the acting sucks, the directing reeks, the entire pic looks like shit, and although gratuitous sex is usually a plus, this is an exception—since it involves such human eyesores as the hefty Dr. Dippy and his aging blonde squeeze. The only positive thing about this dull slop is that I now appreciate Rudy Ray Moore's nickel-and-dime celluloid dementia all the more.

EUROFETISH (Film Threat Video; 1995). These two half-hour films by Steen Schapiro promise to expose the oddest niches of Danish subculture, and are described in their press materials as being "shocking" and "extreme". While we're at it, how about tossing "dated" in there too? Because although these Piercing and S&M documentaries might've been risqué several years ago—back when Charles Gatewood was regularly cranking out this type of thing—nowadays, they're unenlightened, grade school material that you can catch on any daytime talk show. In *MISTRESS OF THE RINGS*, we meet Mette Hintze, a professional piercer who's her own best customer. She takes us to her shop full of spiky-haired punks, who we watch getting their nipples and noses ventilated, then snooze through bland revelations about her job, plus interviews with the city's more ridiculous punks about their obsession with shoving surgical steel through their acne-pocked flesh. The follow-up, *DOMINAN*, covers Copenhagen's sadomasochistic sub-culture by interviewing submissives and dominants, while photographing some cute leather harnesses and light spanking. Though most of the interviewees take themselves waayyyy too seriously (one idiot admits that being tied to his bed made him "glide into a kind of cosmic wholeness"), at least we get a few well-worn laughs thanks to the ol' "Masked Guy in the Cage on All Fours" routine. If you haven't gotten the message yet, both pics are slow and pointless, especially if you know anything about the subject matter in the first place. Or maybe I'm just too jaded to watch this kinda lightweight crap, since I can walk down St. Marks on a summer day and get an eyeful of this lifestyle for free. Still, this dry duet has all the style of a public access show, and although obviously striving to be like Richard Kern, on a purely entertainment level, they're more akin to Richard Simmons.

ROCK 'N' ROLL PSYCHEDELIC TRIP PARTY (1995) and ROCK 'N' ROLL ALIEN MONSTER PARTY (Moonlight Cinema; 1994).

Not much explanation is needed for these slickly-composed compilations. Each is a rapid-fire mix of bizarre film clips and music, aimed at fans of those respective genres. Of course, *TRIP PARTY* is closest to my heart, rewarding us with a whirlwind of old fashioned LSD visuals, ancient nudie loops, Busby Berkeley numbers, old commercials, and beyond. This is no slapdash endeavor though, because it's all gorgeously, lovingly edited. And besides sequences of Peter Fonda zonked out of his mind in *THE TRIP* and its mind-warping SubGenius sampling, the video's creator demonstrates his refined taste in psychedelia by including generous portions of The Monkees' *HEAD*. The subject matter is wide open—from trippy tidbits, to cheap sex, to gratuitous gore—and what other video would combine the likes of Groucho Marx, Anton LaVey and Chow-Yun Fat? Though I wished they'd identified the music, it's probably smart they didn't (since they'd get their asses sued off for copyright infringement)...On the other hand, *MONSTER PARTY* is an infinitely cheesier affair, mixing horror visuals with monster-movie novelty-song non-hits. Lacking

TRIP PARTY's loose (albeit disjointed) energy, this one has all the wit of a brick heaved at your head. For example, a song about a Wolfman is accompanied by various werewolf movies; Alice Cooper's "Welcome to My Nightmare" is played over Freddie Krueger clips; and (of course) a Godzilla montage is backed up by Blue Oyster Cult's hit "While *TRIP* would be best appreciated by a bunch of acidheads when their party hits the 6 a.m. mark, the *MONSTER* tape will appeal more to geekier fanboys, who'd pass up most parties in order to sit home and discuss the latest X-FILES on the Internet.

ANGELS FROM HELL (1968). This relatively early entry in the Biker Genre sweepstakes was released hot on the heels of epics like *THE WILD ANGELS*. Unfortunately, that's just about the only positive thing I can say about this goof, which has no discernible budget, barely a script, nothing resembling a fresh idea, and plenty of going-

nowhere-fast actors. Oddly enough, the pic's so unapologetically lousy it's also the perfect drive-in slop—since you can get totally wasted, screw in the back seat, vomit in a nearby field, come back to your car, and not miss a damned thing. Torn Stern (who went onto further chopper anonymity in *HELL'S ANGELS '69*) stars as Mike, a Nam vet who returns home to his o' biker cronies, The Madcaps—and while resuming his presidency, puts the current leader out of action by blithely snapping his leg at the kneecap (ouch). When we're not watching these hairballs smoking weed and zooming about with "bugs in their teeth", war-ravaged Mike babbles uncontrollably about going to the Rose Parade or taking over Vegas. And let's not forget that at the time, the notion of Nam scrambling a guy's head was a pretty radical statement (on the other hand, maybe the character was *always* an idiot). Things continue their dopey route when these misfits take a field trip to visit an ex-member who's now a hot-shot Hollywood star; Stern boffs a go-go dancer and gets interrupted by her lesbian girlfriend; and they visit some flower children who look more like stragglers from a Walmart Renaissance Faire. Director Bruce Kessler

(*SIMON, KING OF THE WITCHES*) sets most of the chaos in a pissant desert town populated by old farts and over-reacting pigs (lead by police chief-turned-director Jack Starrett), who decide to rid their town of this road-scum. Though never exactly the "cycle-psychos" the ads promised, this hilariously dated idiocy at least hired actors who actually look like unwashed, 4th-Grade-dropout bikers. Featuring Arlene Martel as a "groovy eyed" biker groupie named Ginger, and "No Communication" courtesy of The Peanut Butter Conspiracy

TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME, JUNIE MOON (1969). Director Otto Preminger was responsible for a string of cinematic oddities during his later years (coincidentally, about the same time he was appearing on the *BATMAN* TV-series as Mr. Freeze), including such eccentric delights as *SKIDOO* [SC#6] and *BUNNY LAKE IS MISSING*. Well, this picture wouldn't even get a mention in this mag, except for the

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THAT TELLS IT
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fact it gives Deuce fans the cornea-singeing sight of seeing Liza Minnelli and Fred Williamson in the same goddamned movie! Outside of that rare treat, this is an artificial, sanctimonious, misfit melodrama about a trio of Society's Outcasts who rent a dilapidated shack and deal with modern society's intolerance, including wheelchair queer Robert Moore, epileptic Ken "The White Shadow" Howard, and Minnelli as Junie Moon, whose right side of her face was scarred when a boyfriend pours battery acid on her (if you had to date Liza, wouldn't you?). The biggest laughs come at the outset, with a credit sequence featuring Pete Seeger wandering through the woods like some ancient elf with Alzheimer's, singing "Old Devil Time". After that gut-buster, feel free to Fast Forward until your thumb turns numb, because Williamson doesn't pop up until two-thirds of the way in, playing "Beach Boy" (yes, that's his character's name), a Man Friday at a swanky seaside hotel. Often shirtless and sporting skintight bell-bottoms, he drives the trio around in a dune buggy, and worst of all, carries the crippled Moore around, over his shoulder, while fending off his advances (hard to believe that only three years later, Fred would be slaughtering Whitey in BLACK CAESAR). Except for Fred's brief grg, this is interminable slop, that's so busy being progressively benevolent, it forgets that all of the characters are unlikeable, whiny, self-pitying asswipes. Why the undeniably talent-barren Liza hasn't yet died on the crapper, I'll never know...

HIT LIST (1988). Any self-respected sleaze addict knows that director William Lustig is at the head of the pack, with credentials like MANIAC, VIGILANTE [SC#7] and MANIAC COP. Unfortunately, this more-recent gangland/revenge pic went straight-to-video and never found the audience it deserved, because during the halcyon days of

the Deuce, this would've been a top-of-the-triple-bill fave. The only debit is the presence of puffy-eyed Jan-Michael Vincent as the moral center of the story, but the guy is so strung-out that he looks like a candidate for a future Living Dead movie. Obviously suffering from a long-term case of White Line Fever, he's on auto-pilot throughout and I'd give you odds Emmanuel Lewis could beat the shit outta him. Despite that setback, Bill cranked out a brisk, stylish actioner with style to burn and a kickass opening, when cops break up a funeral, crack open the corpse, and discover a cache of coke disguised as Thanksgiving stuffing. The plot gets rolling when Mob boss Rip Torn takes out a contract on informer Leo Rossi, who's under the witness protection program and living across the street from glassy-eyed suburbanite Jan-M. Best of all, psycho-extraordinaire Lance Henriksen plays a hit man (who works by day as a shoe salesman?) Unfortunately, Mr. Arch Supports screws up the house numbers and instead of slaughtering Rossi's household, hits Vincent's house instead and kidnaps the wrong son. Then, when Rossi's Pizza joint papa is offed, the two team up to rescue the brat and enact revenge. The plot is standard fare, but Lance's wacko charisma and Tom's high-decibel snarling keeps the ball rolling, and in fact, Henriksen is so likably sadistic that you wish Lustig had made *him* the hero, since he's got ten times the energy (and about a billion more brain cells)

than soggy Jan-Michael. And when Lance goes bugfuck, it's a joy to behold, especially during the white-knuckle parking garage finale, in which he proves he's got more lives than Thomasina. Top-notch, grindhouse-style fare highlighted by rabid performances, hardboiled action, and Jan-Michael's hilarious, career-killing lethargy.

FLESHPOT ON 42nd STREET [a.k.a. The Girls of 42nd Street] (1972). Any flick that opens with glorious old 42nd Street footage gets points from me right off the bat—especially nowadays, since there isn't a porno store or triple-bill theatre in sight. But the fact it's also directed/written/photographed by the late (occasionally great) Andy Milligan, makes it worth a look. Personally, I never thought much of Milligan's penny-ante horror fare, like THE RATS ARE COMING! THE WEREWOLVES ARE HERE!, and it wasn't until viewing his Gay Bathhouse short VAPORS [SC#6] that I knew the guy was more than just a gorehound hack—he also had the rare ability to capture the underbelly of urban life with a surprising amount of streetwise wit. Here's another savvy glimpse into the gutter, featuring Diana Lewis as Dusty, a lazy sexpot who splits from her working-class slob/boyfriend when he asks her to do some housework (pawning his TV in the process). This Dusty is a real piece of work, all right, especially when our heroine runs into a Times Square drag queen named Cherry (Lynn Flanagan), which leads to glorious tales of pimps, junkies, fags, hard-ons, rough trade, blow-jobs, and fetishism galore. For an in-joke, they even catch a double bill at the Lyric, of Milligan's own TORTURE DUNGEON and BLOODTHIRSTY BUTCHERS. All the while, the film is loaded with ludicrously depraved fun which not only pegs the era, but makes it obvious that Milligan knew (and loved) these mean streets. Great locales. Realistic dialogue. Hard-edged

sleaze galore. And when he films a scene in a real-life bar, you can almost smell the dried piss on the toilet seats. We even get a young Harry Reems popping up as a barroom pick-up who Dusty falls for. Obviously influenced by the then-current underground movement, this Milligan masterwork not only plays to the mutter-flogging crowd, but has a voyeuristic understanding (and more importantly, sympathy) for its down-'n'-out troupe. Without doubt, one of his most fascinating endeavors, and further proof that when armed with a subject he had his heart into, Andy could be a lowlife-auteur with the best of 'em.

TEENAGE TUPELO (1995). Much as I adore Something Weird Video, it's sad to report that their first original release is pretty lame (although, on the good side, it makes everything else in Vraney's vast catalog look more watchable

in comparison). I also hate to dump on a film that's an autobiographical account—but even if director/writer John Michael McCarthy's heart is in the right place, his decisions behind the camera rarely are. There's no pacing, no style, no excitement, and *positively* no actors. Basically, this is the story of his mother, served up as an homage to those grainy, b&w sex pics from the '60s (ahhh, how sweet). D'Lana Tunnell stars as a young waitress, circa '62, who gets knocked up by Johnny Tu-Note (Hugh B. Brooks), a lumpen, womanizing, rockabilly schmuck passing through town. Fired from her job, she begins

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tooling 'round town with a trio of tough local broads in lowcut slutware. The idea of four rebellious gals on the prowl might sound like prime Russ Meyer territory, but don't get your hopes up—this is more like SLOWER PUSSYCAT! SNORE! SNORE! Amidst all the retro-trendiness (dragsters, movie palaces, Salvation Army fashions), the tale is loaded with authentic-looking slimeballs and hick humor; punctuated with color, modern-day Scopitones; has plenty of bare breasts to keep indiscriminating lechers amused; and ends with the director's own birth. But while it tries to be a gutter-eyed MAYBERRY R.F.D., the flick is actually less tacky than most current-day white trash sitcoms. Though admirable for its grit 'n' honesty, it can't hide the fact it's nothing more than a limp, lackluster home movie.

actor-turned-fetish freak (who pleads for Jillson to "Hit me. Beat me") Thoroughly tame stuff, and although Jillson is certainly a looker, she's also so stupid you worry that her skin-tight attire is blocking all the oxygen from getting to her brain

THE HITLER TAPES (1994). God help us. It's the unwelcome sequel to *EVEN HITLER HAD A GIRL FRIEND* [SC#5]. Since I could barely tolerate the first pic (the heartwarming tale of a fat loser who watched Cable Smut in his stained undershorts), I'm glad to report that the follow-up is even worse than the first. I guess director Ronnie Cramer made a few bucks off the original, or else he never would've considered foisting this barely-an-hour-long fiasco on the public.

Even the hard-luck, brain-damaged fans of the first voyeur-fest will be pissed at this rip-off, which lacks the low-life angst of the first (in addition to a fraction as many bare tits). On the other hand, it's the only movie to proudly feature a lead character who shaves his back and wets himself on camera. The story picks up where the first debacle left off—following the pathetic sexcapades of (the late) Andren Scott as Marcus, a pathetic, limp-dicked slob who peeks through his sexy neighbor's bathroom window, wastes his cash on Phone Sex services, and can't even watch a woman undress without cowering behind his easy chair. Worst of all, his favorite porno cable station is discontinued in favor of a Cartoon Channel! And why is it called the *Hitler Tapes*? Because all the while, Karen Zaczkowski sits on her sofa in her undies, listening to Marcus' wretched encounters with the opposite sex on a tape recorder or VCR. When it comes to scraping-the-barrel sexploitation, I'm as big a fan as anyone, but this T&A is supremely dull, featuring all the finesse of a cheap porno flick, but without



SUPERCHICK (1973). Drive-in sludge doesn't get any dumber—or more instantly lovable—than this Crown International flotsam, courtesy of director Ed Forsyth (*CHESTY ANDERSON*, U.S.N.). Best of all, the pic's shapely blonde lead is played by Joyce Jillson, who never would've predicted that a quarter century later she'd be a widely-read Astrology columnist. After viewing the flick it's no surprise she chucked acting, because although appropriately hot, this lady is the Elizabeth Berkeley of the '70s, playing a swinging gal with a double life. On one hand, she's a dowdy stewardess named Tara B. True. But as soon as she deplanes, off goes her cheap brunette wig and frumpy pants suit, and on goes her black leather hot pants (which gives whiplash to every male in her wake). This woman's got a man in every port, and though they all want to marry her, no one man can ever fulfill her needs. One's a wealthy old fart, another is a famous rock star, and when she wants to romp on the beach there's her "fun in the sun" beau. But despite a title like *SUPERCHICK*, don't expect an action pic, because although skilled in karate, she's into helping mankind in a decidedly different fashion—like when she schtupps a horny Marine in the airborne rest room. And with her mini-wardrobe, it's no surprise she'll get hassled by a trio of bikers (including Dan "Grizzly Cokespoon" Haggerty, who suggests they "knock off the motorcycle movie talk and gang bang her"). A semblance of a plot erupts in the last half hour (unlike the first hour, which is simply Jillson boffing her stable), when the Mob plans a mid-air heist and Tara gets conned into carrying their firepower onboard. But in the action-packed 30 second finale, she foils 'em. This is all too tacky to be boring, with enough nsqué sitcom-style sexuality to feel like an extended episode of *LOVE AMERICAN STYLE*. Plus, there's no better reason to check it out than for a short (but pathetic) final-reel-cameo from John Carradine, playing an aging B-movie horror

the pay-off. Even the female co-stars are less than enthusiastic about doffing their clothes this time 'round. Just as important, why watch a movie about the type of schmuck you can bump into any day on the street? Maybe it's aimed at guys who watch Marcus in order to feel they're not such losers after all? If that's the case, I'd suggest that instead of renting this video, they rent a life instead.

LEGENDARY PANTY MASK (1997?). Just what the world needs: More half-naked female Japanese superheroines! Frankly, most of this crap is pathetic. They're quickly slapped together on video, loaded with leering humor, and whose only *raison d'être* is to keep lonely, basement-dwelling video-geeks busy scraping the dried jism off their picture tubes. If you're still interested (and unfortunately, I know you are), here's an entry that at least gets points for its sheer incoherence, beginning with a broken-English version of "Row Row Your Boat" and immediately followed by Asian punk Indians (imagine *LAST OF THE MOHICANS* meets *THE ROAD WARRIOR*, with just a hint of *CAN'T STOP THE MUSIC*). Now get this: Our setting is an all-female Old West town called Crime City, where the sheriffs dress like nuns, the citizens consist of adorable teenage girls in school uniforms, and it's been so long since they've seen a man that a picture of John Wayne starts a riot. Things heat up when a new girl enters town, and it's lucky nobody realizes this 'girl' is actually a 'guy', or else all this horny jailbait would tear him to pieces in a feeding frenzy. Oh, amidst all this idiocy, did I forget to mention our title character, *Legendary Panty Mask* (Miyuki Katon)? She's a superbabe who uses a bow 'n' arrow, wears an Indian headdress and studded bikini, and (hence her catchy name) conceals her identity by stretching a pair of panties over her face. Labeled a "messenger of the Ugly Disgusting Devil" by the evil nuns (by the way, it's *great* to see nuns

portrayed as the sadistic villains that they actually are, for a change), Panty Mask is barely in the movie appearing only when trouble arises, then leaving the lone fake-girl (who's got a hard-on for the barely-clothed do-gooder) to sweep up any leftover stupidity. This hilariously prurient swill comes complete with continual product placements for a Japanese drink called Calpis, and a musical finale that has the war-painted girls taking on the nuns to "Ten Little Indians." It was at this moment that I realized what it would've been like if *DANCES WITH WOLVES* had been directed by Jodorowsky.

BEYOND THE DOOR 2 [Transfer Suspense Hypnos] [a.k.a. Shock] (1977). Don't get your hopes up if you enjoyed the first *BEYOND THE DOOR* movie (all three of you)—the *EXORCIST* rip-off featuring a bare-all, post-NANNY AND THE PROFESSOR Juliet Mills. This in-name-only sequel has little to do with that sucky original, and though on the surface it sounds just as dim-witted, director Mario Bava (for his final feature) does his damndest with the flimsiest of ideas and a piss-ant budget. It begins like any cheapjack Euro-muck, with an intro to a gratingly wholesome family (mom, stepfather and a son named Marco) moving into a new home. And this Marco is such an annoying, hatred-inducing brat that when the spirit of Marco's vengeful dead dad possesses the kid, it can only be an improvement. So while stepdad flies off on business, Mom (Daria Nicolodi, Dario Argento's wife) is left alone with her ever-more-creepy offspring, who keeps sneaking down into the cellar for a mysterious purpose. He also plays voyeur on Mom while she's showering, threatens to kill her, and uses his psychokinetic, *CARRIE*-like powers to send her off her rocker (imagine if Bobby in *THE BRADY BUNCH* starred in *THE OMEN*). But Lamberto Bava's script doesn't stop there. Mom is also getting drugged by her new hubbie (hence her hallucinations of half-decomposed hands clutching at her), which only compounds her previous traumas of a drug addicted first hubbie and electroshock treatments. In lieu of any subtlety, Bava fills every frame of this hysteria-fest with outlandish touches, cheap thrills and dime-store hallucinations borrowed from '60s acid flicks. Meanwhile, Nicolodi is put through the celluloid wringer, getting the complete *REPULSION* treatment. And I'll bet Bava had a ball cramming his wafer-thin plot with rats up skirts, undead husbands in bed, pickaxes in the chest, floating knives, a haunted piano, and nightmares galore! Yeah! Though far from masterwork status, this pic is so unflinchingly surreal and downbeat (especially the grim finale) that it's sure to win you over with its non-stop, ludicrous delights.

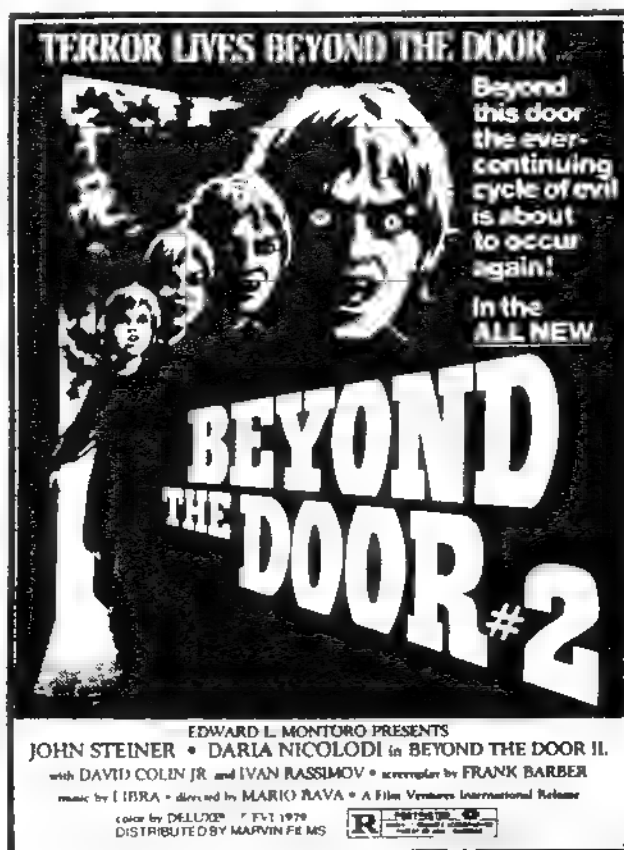
THAT LITTLE MONSTER (1993). Distributed by Sinister Cinema, this 54-minute indie is an intermittently clever horror caper. And although it looks good (thanks in large part to the striking b&w cinematography), it takes forever to get started, is laden with limp dialogue, and needs severe trimming. Plus, when the best they can get for "star" cameos are Forrest J. Ackerman and Reggie (PHANTASM 1-3) Bannister—Forry introduces the movie and Reggie pops

up as an oddball named Twelvetees—it's like putting a sign on your movie, saying "For Fan-Geeks Only". Melissa Baum stars as a babysitter named Jamie, who's being interviewed by *The Willock's* for the job of taking care of Wolper, their "little monster", while they're off partying. Of course, Wolper turns out to be a horrid, puffy-faced, black-eyed critter, gurgling in his crib and immediately leaping on the vapid Sitter. From then on, it's a household struggle (Jamie ropes the kids into his crib, the baby breaks free, et cetera), ending with a predictable punchline. The set decoration is top notch (particularly the creepy adornments to Wolper's bedroom), but that can't hide the fact that the story is dull and the lead actress is such an overwrought bimbo that I was rooting she'd get snuffed by the wretched li'l beastie. Every 'clever' plot twist is telegraphed a mile away, and though director Paul Bunnell is obviously attempting a modern-day homage to the *TWILIGHT ZONE*, beefed up with some Lynchian dream imagery, it promises more than it delivers. Loaded with style and

devoid of substance, it only proves that Bunnell has watched a lot of movies, spent a lot of cash, and doesn't yet have a clue about how to make a halfway original film.

JACK THE MANGLER [a.k.a. 7 Cadavers For Scotland Yard] (1971). I've never understood the allure of Paul Naschy films. From his dozen-plus Werewolf pics to this Jack the Ripper-style Dead Whore chiller, this one-time circus weight lifter always seemed charisma-barren and overly sullen, confusing on-screen moping with honest-to-goodness intensity. The simple fact that he's often the best thing about his movies isn't so much a recommendation of the guy, but rather, an indication of just how lousy his films can be. For example, this glum affair slows to a crawl whenever it focuses on Scotland Yard detectives jabbering away about the case. So even if Naschy stumbles through the flick looking like any glum, blue collar schmuck (imagine watching your dad starring in a horror film), he's the only thing that keeps you barely involved. At first glance, the plot sounds cracker-

jack, with a modern-day psycho on the prowl, slaughtering ladies in the style of Jack the Ripper, and stealing various organs—even mailing a decapitated head to the cops. Naschy plays Peter Dachman, a crippled ex-trapeze artist whose wife becomes the Nouveau Ripper's second victim, after which he vows to hobble about the city until he locates the killer. Of course, following the typical structure, the cops suspect Naschy of the mutilation murders (it's difficult not to when he wakes up with a fresh victim beside him in bed). Don't expect much gore though, because outside of loving close-ups of knives thrust into bare flesh and a few home-canned body parts, this is unforgivable tame. Co-scripted by Naschy (under his real name, Jacinto Molina), there's barely enough plot for a half-hour TV show, and if you manage to stay awake, you'll figure out the 'surprise' ending long before director Jose Luis Madrid puts us out of our misery. Naschy's rabid fans (countable on two hands?) explain that you have to watch the uncut, undubbed versions of his movies to feel their full impact. That's a nice pitch, but in this case, it still only adds up to a numbing Euro-snooze. The celluloid equivalent of Nytol.



The Rest of the Shit:

I know I'm going to get a lot of shit by recommending a Luke Perry movie, but John McNaughton's **NORMAL LIFE** is easily one of the most startling films of the year. So bleak and breathtaking it'll leave you on the floor, thanks to a brilliant, open wound performance by Ashley Judd, who rips loose as one of the most compellingly screwed-up screen damsels of the decade. Perry (thankfully, dumping his prettyboy veneer) is a cop who falls for Judd, an overwrought beauty who gets addicted to anything within reach, slices herself up when depressed, and bankrupts the guy with her credit card maxing. The natural alternative? Parlay your police/security guard skills into a career of robbing banks, in order to buy the sweet little home you always wanted. But skeptics beware: Luke Perry actually displays his acting chops here, Judd is the most screwed-up damsel since BETTY BLUE, while McNaughton proves that HENRY, PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER wasn't a fluke. Capturing the dysfunctional underbelly of love, this romance has enough raw heartbreak and psychosis to make it the perfect Date Film for The East Village. One of this year's very best.

The most hypnotic experience of last year was Lars Von Trier's **THE KINGDOM**. And since I couldn't make it through Trier's previous feature, **ZENTROPA**, without nodding off, it's doubly impressive that I more than happily survived this 4-and-a-half-hour epic. Lensed for Danish TV, this is like an extended episode of **BEN CASEY** on PCP. Set in a Copenhagen hospital (known as The Kingdom) and overloaded with darkly quirky characters, this is part ghost story, part black comedy, and only gets weirder as it progresses. A baby's haunting cry in an elevator leads a woman to investigate, a pair of retarded dishwashers are the Greek Chorus, a Swedish neurosurgeon screams his hatred for "Danish Scum" from the roof, a ghostly ambulance makes an appearance, plus there's a missing head. Full of supernatural overtones and double-dealing docs, this leaves so many dangling plot twists that I hope the next installments don't take as long to get to the States.

If you live anywhere near Manhattan, watching Larry Clark's controversial (yawn) **KIDS** is as enlightening as an afternoon in Washington Square, watching the skate-punks pick at their lice. The first question: Do you *really* wanna watch a bunch of aimless, white homeboy wannabes bunning about and talking shit, while one pimply, A.I.D.'s-infected dork named Telly spreads his sperm to all-too-willing virgins? Yeah, we know this supposed to be Raw Truth, Larry, but these Calvin Kleinoids are as pre-fab as The Monkees. Meanwhile, the flick is like an urban teen's wet dream of what they *wish* their lives were like. What this movie needed is a character like Parker Posey's **PARTY GIRL** to suddenly walk in and kick Telly squarely in the nuts. Personally, if I wanna watch a pack of rebellious youths, cruising for cheap thrills, I'll take **THE LI'L RASCALS** over these dull shemps anyday. The only upside? These **CHILDREN** (a better title) are so annoying, this pic could make the Pat Buchanan change his stance on legalized abortion.

For the first 2 minutes, I had hope that **THE RETURN TO THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** would be a cool, cruel new take on the legend—bringing it slam-bang into the dysfunctional '90s. No such luck. And despite director Kim Henkel's co-scripting connection to the original, this is 5th rate in every way—lacking the wicked humor, but following the same ol' structure, with a stranded carload of teens (this time, after a school dance). Leatherface looks like a Wigstock reject, the family seems more like drunken frat boys than backwoods psychos, and the only survivor is bespectacled heroine Renee Zellweger, who receives abuse from family, friends and fiends. Best known as the lead babe in **LOVE AND A 45**, Zellweger is gorgeous, comic, and loaded with raw charisma. Let's hope it doesn't get homogenized now that she's been signed onto the latest Tom Cruise project.

Wong Kar-Wai is the current wunderkind of HK cinema, with Tarantino's Miramax arm distributing **CHUNGKING EXPRESS** to the mass market. But **FALLEN ANGELS** is his latest, most wondrously extreme work, complete with the type of crazed, handheld camerawork (courtesy of Christopher Doyle) that would give DePalma wet dreams. Once again he intertwines two small-scale storylines. The first concerns a professional debt collector ("I hate digging bullets out of my own body"), and the other, a more-than-eccentric con. This isn't your typical HK shoot 'em up though, and audiences might have to work to get a foothold on Wong's poetic rhythms, as the leads deal with fucked-up women and their own identities. Highly recommended for its bizarre, hallucinogenic sequences, but with surprisingly touching moments sprinkled amongst the emotional chaos.

The plot for **HATE [La Haine]** sounds like it could've just as easily been filmed in Compton. Instead, we get a housing project just outside of Paris, and follow a trio angry, racially divergent teens (Arab, Jew and Black) during a day-long adventure after a friend of theirs is shot during a riot. Jobless, broke and pissed-off—plus the angst of the lot (who sees Travis Bickle as a role model) is packing a cop's missing service revolver. Though nothing too radical in terms of plot, there's plenty of b&w reality, solid performances, and a bubbling undercurrent of rage (plus some hilarious episodes, to keep it from becoming all doom 'n' gloom). Too bad 28-year-old director Mathieu Kassovitz lets his pretensions get the best of him at times, because the more he makes his presence known, the weaker his film becomes. Still, it's a savage li'l drama that gives some much-needed balls to the lump French film scene.

Three words to describe **THE YOUNG POISONER'S HANDBOOK**? Creepy As Fuck. This scalding, true story from first-time director Benjamin Ross is far from your typical British fare, sucking you into the life of Graham Young, a teen who's so obsessed with chemistry and poisons that he uses his horrible family as guinea pigs for his experiments with Thallium. Of course, after his first success, he continues his scientific studies on neighbors, co-workers, and anyone who doesn't realize what their drink is laced with. Hugh O'Connor is so disturbingly believable that you forget he's acting, and although the film doesn't shed much light on the deeper reasons behind his fixation, it (better still) simply accepts it on its own grisly ground. One of the nastiest, most engagingly demented pics of the year, laced with a black humor that keeps it on the edge of the grotesque, but always grounded in reality. Brilliant.



THE YOUNG POISONER'S HANDBOOK

A film by Benjamin Ross



What the hell can you say about **SHOWGIRLS** that nobody else has? It's been reviled. It's been lauded as a new camp classic. All I saw was a naked Barbie doll (I take that back—cuz even Barbie has more charisma than Liz "Shaved by the Bell" Berkeley), trying her damndest (and failing miserably) to look like a manipulating sexpot. Sure, I was jazzed on Las Vegas when I saw this laff riot, but it had little to do with the city and lots to do with wooden sex scenes and a scriptwriter whose paycheck is making him deaf to how us poor folks talk. So boring and unerotic that it's the first time I've ever fast-forwarded through a lap dance. As for other recent Vegas films? **LEAVING LAS VEGAS** is the perfect way to prepare for a trip to that town. Though a little squishy at times, Nicolas Cage's performance

prepares you for the all-you-can-drink lifestyle, Elizabeth Shue makes you think the streetcorner whores will look that good (they don't), and the film nicely captures that off-the-strip ennui (though I could've done without the crappy Sting tunes). Finally, there's **CASINO**, which I saw three months ago, and barely remember something that often happens with normal studio fare, but rarely with anything from Scorsese. DeNiro slumped, Pesci Xeroxed, and Stone made the only impression because you figured from the outset that she was gonna reek. Thankfully, not as commercial as **THE COLOR OF MONEY**, just long and unfocused (though pretty fucking brutal).

More New Releases

Director Max Allan Collins gets points for casting everybody's favorite BAD SEED, Patty McCormack, as **MOMMY**. In this mid-western **STEPPATHER** clone, there's horror lurking behind an overly-protective, mother's smile, with McCormack doing anything to keep her daughter (Rachel Lemeux) at the top of her class—even if it means murdering her teacher. Unfortunately, what starts out like an even lower-budgeted **SERIAL MOM**, turns increasingly serious along the way and remains rooted in a soggy (not to mention, tame) narrative. But even if its dysfunctional-family theme never takes flight, this Iowa-lensed indie boasts a keen supporting cast, including Jason Miller, Mickey Spillane and Brinke Stevens (believe it or not, quite capable in a non-Scream Queen role).

Alyssa Milano has all the erotic charm (not to mention, acting ability) of a turnip with implants, so it is any surprise that **POISON IVY 2: LILY** is pure, lackluster shit? Compare this one with its predecessor and you'll quickly learn the difference between Good Trash and Sanctimonious Trash. Milano plays Lily, a naive college art major who finds the insipid diary of some two-bit slut named Ivy in her closet and gets turned on by it (how's that for a rip-off concept for a sequel?). Then she meets a cute neighbor, babysits her Art Instructor's little girl, while her teacher has the hots for her. It's all a **BIG YAWN**. Milano looks bedraggled throughout, as if she's hung over, and makes an unconvincing Object of Desire. Leading to nothing more than lump straight-to-video Red Shoe Diarrhea.

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR the live action translation of the popular anime, is pure hokum. But even if director Tony Randel (**TICKS**) can't do much with his hoary futuristic story (the good folks of North Star vs. the sadistic Southern Cross and their **ROAD WARRIOR** style thugs) he keeps it moving with bloody set pieces and a savvy supporting cast, including Clint Howard, Melvin Van Peebles, Malcolm McDowell (getting a day's work as the hero's dead dad) and Chris Penn hamming it up as a spotty-faced geek assassin with a throbbing brain. Unfortunately, although our wandering hero is supposed to be part Clint Eastwood's Man With No Name and part Sonny Chiba, lumpy Gary Daniels' performance is summed up in four words: "Fabio in **KUNG FU**." Despite some cut-rate stylization, the pic drowns in a clichéd (yet self-soothing) script. Worse still, despite plenty of wholesale carnage between glandular half-wits, it was obviously trimmed to get an R rating. I'll pass.

HOLLOW REED is essentially a small-scale British drama about child abuse and a custody battle, and if made in the U.S. it'd be fodder for a prime-time TV movie starring Heather Locklear. But director Angela Pope pulls solid, unclipped perfs out of the cast, which includes Hal Hartley, vet Martin Donovan (a SC, upscale favorite), and Joely Richardson (**DROWNING BY NUMBERS**) as the estranged couple, Ian Hart (**LAND OF FREEDOM**) as Martin's lover, and Sam Bould in the wrenching role of a young boy whose everyday existence is turned into an open wound. Sad, honest and all too believable, it not only exposes the surface brutality of family dysfunction, but (better still) how people allow themselves to be blinded of it.

Despite its pleasantly manipulative framework, **MUTE WITNESS** felt like day-old bread, trying to pass itself off as freshly baked. Basically, it's just a cheap B-movie romp, (crudely) ripping off the same Hitchcock techniques that DePalma was dumped on for, decades earlier. Set in Moscow, a British film crew visits to make a movie and, after closing time, a mate crew member witnesses (what she thinks is) a snuff-style murder. And so begins her run-for-my-life adventures. Laughable, dubbing cuts the edge off the pic, and although Marina Sudina is quite likable in the lead, only isolated sequences make any impact. A slick, amusing chunk of exploitation, but far from the astounding thriller that the more rabid critics genuflected at.

Diane Ladd is a goddess of weird-assed cinema, with a career ranging from **THE WILD ANGELS** to **WILD AT HEART**, so it's no surprise I'd check out **MOTHER**, which she also co-produced. This Oedipal psycho-drama courtesy of director Frank LaLoggia (**FEAR NO EVIL**) stars Ladd as a possessive mother who goes bonkers when her grown son wants to play "hide the bone" with the lovely Ele Keats. Though predictable, Ladd is the ultimate doting Mom, turning down out-of-town scholarships, hiding family secrets, and pretending to commit suicide when he threatens to cut her apron strings. Co-starring Olympia Dukakis as Diane's catty best friend, who baits Ladd until she grabs an axe to settle her problem. These two Grande Dames are so bitchy that you wish they had a better project in which to sharpen their claws.

Caro and Jeunet's **CITY OF LOST CHILDREN** is the perfect double bill with Terry Gilliam's **12 MONKEYS**, since both pics feature convoluted storylines that are instantly forgiven in light of their mind-boggling visuals. We all know that Gilliam's **MONKEYS** is breathtaking, but a tad soft in the center, with solid work from Bruce Willis (who, like Jeff Bridges in **FISHER KING**, was overshadowed by a showier, albeit grating supporting performance). On the other hand, few people will even see **LOST CHILDREN** until it hits the small screen (and loses much of its impact). This modern-day fairy tale will give small children nightmares (as all good fairy tales should do), opening with a roomful of psychotic Santas and taking us on a fantastic journey that involves a half-dozen bumbling clones, a disembodied brain, a villain who steals children's dreams, plus a circus strongman (Ron Perlman) and his Lolita-esque, 9-year-old accomplice, Judith Vittet. gorgeously crafted, overflowing with the darkest niches of a child's imagination, and well worth a look. I only wish there were films like this around when I was a kid.

Sure, the title **DEAD BOYZ DON'T FLY** sounds stooopid, but who knew this grim, NYC-lensed indie was a '90s, urban answer to **LAST HOUSE ON THE LEFT**? This is wall-to-wall sleaze, folks, with a trio of punks (who look like leftovers from a **WARRIORS** casting call) laying siege to a high-rise office building, and slaughtering anyone in their way. Included in the crew is a punk "yo-yo man" turned elevator-killer, and better still, Brad Friedman as a cross-dressing, Catholic mom-obsessed psychopath-extraordinaire named Goose, who's so cruel he'll rip the teeth out of an old fart. Thank goodness the building's janitor is an emotionally scarred Vietnam vet. Director Howard Winters squeezes the most out of his low budget, offering up hilarious plot twists amidst 102 minutes of random, senseless carnage (just be sure to rent the unrated cut). So relentlessly immoral that you can't help but cheer.

I love Stuart Gordon's early grue-fests, but the guy's running on autopilot with Full Moon's **CASTLE FREAK**, a melancholy endeavor lacking Stu's gonzo charm. The plot's simple(minded)—an American family inherits a creepy European castle, not knowing that a grey-skinned, genitalia-free cannibal has been locked away in the basement for years. Filmed in Charles Band's own castle (and knowing Full Moon's cost-cutting, expect it to be featured in every one of their productions 'til Hell freezes over: How about **CASTLE OF THE DOLLMAN**? Or better still, **THERE'S A PUPPETMASTER IN MY CASTLE**?), the pic reunites **RE-ANIMATOR** co-stars Barbara Crampton and Jeffrey Combs (who gets to topple off the wagon, screw a local whore against a stone wall, and become the world's most unlikely action hero), with cute Jessica Dollarhide as the couple's blind teenager who gets the honor of being drooled on by our title Freak. Despite some nice carnage, this is dopey 'n' instantly forgettable.

How could I pass up the latest Troma release, **FEMME FONTAINE: KILLER BABE FOR THE C.I.A.**? But despite its camp title and dime-store budget, this pic takes itself rather seriously and is packed with as much international spy hokum as any John Clancy novel. Writer/director/producer Margot Hope also stars as Drew Fontaine, a trendy artist who moonlights as a globehopping professional hitwoman, and deals with a female Aryan hate group, skinhead neanderthals, schlock movie producers, the secret behind her Secret Agent Dad's disappearance, and James Hong as her Sensei, whose temple has become a front for stashing drugs. Cheesy, but nicely sadistic when Fontaine takes charge. Plus, with a slicker than usual veneer thanks to editor/cinematographer Gary Graver. Surprisingly competent, but sure to disappoint Tromanians in search of tits 'n' gore.

Finally, I can't leave without mentioning **FROM DUSK 'TIL DAWN**. One of the stoopest pics of the year, which nevertheless, when seen in the right circumstances (lotsa rowdy assholes, a jacketful of beer) is exactly what Rodriguez & Tarantino set out to create. Unfortunately, instead of emulating a grim, thought-provoking vampire pic like **NEAR DARK**, they took the **FRIGHT NIGHT**-esque latex idiocy route. Still, it's good to see Fred Williamson kicking ass in a major release after far too many years. As for his Whitey co-stars, Clooney was shockingly good, Tarantino was halfway believable as a geeky psychopath, Keitel took the cash and ran, and Juliette Lewis played, well, Juliette Lewis (just like she always does). Fast-paced and creative enough that you don't realize how ridiculous the whole movie is until you're long outta the theatre.

Books AND Zines

ANGER by Bill Landis (Harper Collins; 290 pgs; \$25). Any half-way-decent biography of underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger is sure to be a treat, but the fact it's written by one of the first great grindhouse-filmzine editors, Bill (SLEAZOID EXPRESS) Landis, makes this a must-have, since Landis has a plumb subject at which to aim his prose. It's not surprising that control-freak Anger would have nothing to do with this book, even though Landis has dealt with him many times in the past. Just don't expect a crude Tel-All, because Landis has not only done his homework well, but respects his subject. Though it might not convert any newcomers to Anger's legacy, Landis' ingratiating style makes this a sad, insightful look at an artist and his obsessions, while giving the reader a glimpse into his films (including such seminal experimental works as *SCORPIO RISING* and *INVOCATION OF MY DEMON BROTHER*) and his relationships with the likes of Anaïs Nin, Jimmy Page, Anton LaVey, and Mick Jagger. Landis delves into Anger's foundation of childhood fetishes, homosexual lifestyle, Magickal dealings, and Crowley influences, in the process, transforming his book into more than just a record of one individual. It's also an evocation of a tawdry, long-gone era, including the Time Square Tenderloin district, '60s audiences tripping to his "Sacred Mushroom edition" of *INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME*, plus Anger's disdain for Andy Warhol's critical and financial success in the wake of his own poverty. Even when it's not a particularly flattering portrait, it's an absorbing tale of a man who is half brilliant, half crazed, and during his squirrelier later years, manages to alienate just about everybody he's ever known. Fans of Landis' old SLEAZOID days will appreciate the occasional deviant film reference, and better still, unlike most books that chronicle the history of underground cinema, Landis avoids all the dry, masturbatory analysis that keeps the genre at an arm's-length from most average moviegoers. This is a wonderful, meticulously researched book, full of anecdotes and angst, bringing dimension to one of the most illusive and imitated figures in American cinema.

SWIMMING UNDERGROUND, MY YEARS IN THE WARHOL FACTORY by Mary Woronov (Journey Editions; 230 pgs; \$19.95). Mary Woronov was one of the few survivors of Andy Warhol's dazed entourage to survive the experience and succeed in her own career, turning in dangerously comic performances in *HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD* and *EATING RAOUL*. It's strange that many of her biggest fans have no idea Woronov was one of the featured "superstars" in Warhol's groundbreaking (ly dull) *THE CHELSEA GIRLS*, and now gives us the inside dope in this brilliantly honest book. Because instead of a simple history, Woronov reaches deeper—into her childhood, sexuality and inability to love anyone in "the human-skin package", while bringing a harsh poetry to even the smallest observations ("Bus stations are so lonely, and always freezing, they are the acid test of a traveler's determination"). First hauled into the Manhattan nightlife of the '60s by Gerard Malanga, Woronov was instantly sucked into the riptide of Warhol's Factory as another striking new face, dropping out of Cornell in order to hang out with drag queens in the back room of Max's Kansas City and strut her S&M dominatrix routine at the Dom. Woronov is filled with razored observations and hilarious tidbits about the entire twisted era, and all

of the familiar lost souls are on display—primarily Ondine, who was her closest companion during that fabulously brain-addled time. Better still, her strength lies in the way she transports the reader into her nightly, amphetamine-fueled adventures and hallucinations, even as she captures the entire spectrum of artists, wannabees, sycophants, and professional misfits. Though not the most flattering portrait of some individuals, thankfully, Mary doesn't allow herself to come off as a total angel either. Especially when she gets fed up with a way-too-adoring fan, and late one night, pushes her off a subway platform and calmly watches her struggle on the tracks as a train approaches (on the other hand, the incident is funny as fuck, and I only wish I'd been there to witness it firsthand). This is a powerful, firsthand memoir that you mustn't pass up.

THE EYES by Jesus Ignacio Aldapuerta (Headpress/Critical Vision; 88 pages; \$10.95). Though Aldapuerta was burnt to death in an apparent suicide in 1987, his wretched stories live on in this new English language translation of his graphic, scatological works. Although the volume might look thin at first glance, I doubt many readers will walk away unsatisfied, since it's chock full of charming anecdotes involving murder, rape, mutilation, pedophilia, necrophilia, and the occasional cannibalism. Meanwhile, the Introduction's short, five page bio of the guy is so disturbing it could almost be confused with one of his fictional tales (at least I *hope* these tales are fictional). In one, a plane crash on a snowy slope gives a curious deviant the opportunity to play with the corpse's frozen internal organs. Ambulance workers in a war-ravaged town use their "humanitarian" mission as a cover to rape and eat the near-dead victims. A teacher indulges in long-secreted fantasies while administering punishment to an 11-year-old boy. But without question, the most compellingly outrageous of the lot is "Armful", in which an arrested sicko is left overnight in a cell with the 9-year-old girl he was accused of "purchasing". Deciding to eliminate the evidence against him, he rapes the child, eats the body, and destroy the remains—all ladled on the reader in deliriously meticulous detail. Aldapuerta puts his brief medical training to good use throughout, and proudly bathes the courageous reader in his vivid world of sex 'n' death, while reveling in tiny details (like the look and smell of burnt flesh) and effortlessly earning the title of "the Andalusian de Sade." Needless to add, this makes a terrific Mother's Day present.

IMMORAL TALES by Cathal Tohill and Pete Tombs (St. Martin's Griffin; 272 pgs; \$17.95). Subtitled "European Sex and Horror Movies 1956-1984", this is, without question, one of the most amazing, invaluable film reference books of the decade. Even fans who think they're familiar with this type of Eurotrash will be bowled at its breadth, because where else can you find entire chapters devoted to the careers Jean Rollin, Jose Larraz, Walerian Borowczyk, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and (like it or not) over 50 pages on Jess Franco? The volume kicks off with essays on the roots of the 'fantastique' film, then proceeds with detailed histories of the Italian, German, French, and Spanish sleaze-film industry—each chapter concluding with several lengthy reviews of the tops from that country. Don't forget the hundreds of rare ad slicks and photos, many featuring an inter-

changeable Eurobabe in a state of undress. Once you begin, you won't be able to put it down, while the authors' exhaustive, encyclopedic knowledge is laced with a fan's exuberance and respect for the subject. It's worth having for the Appendix alone, which gives us mini-bios of the genre's major figures, both behind and in front of the camera—everyone from Andrzej Zulawski to Brigitte Lahaie (I didn't know she wrote an autobiography, *Moi, la Scandaleuse*, back in '87. Has it ever been translated into English?) Smart, lurid, and informative, this is the ultimate source on the wide-ranging subject. Needless to add, it's a Must Have for any cinema deviant, who'll then spend the next year digging up copies of these obscure gems.

BACK TO THE BATCAVE

by Adam West with Jeff Rovin (Berkeley; 257 pgs.; \$12). First off, I have to admit that even if this is just another generic showbiz bio, I still got a kick out of it—because back when I was a six-year-old, BATMAN was the first television show I became rabidly addicted to (complete with the lunch box, record album, autographed photo, et cetera). Written with all the excitement 'n' flavor of a meal at White Castle, West covers his life and career, focusing primarily on his three-year-long bout with super-stardom and later frustrations of being branded by this one role. Consequently, by devoting so much space to sanctimonious recollections and Bat-trivia, this book will be unappealing to anyone who's not a

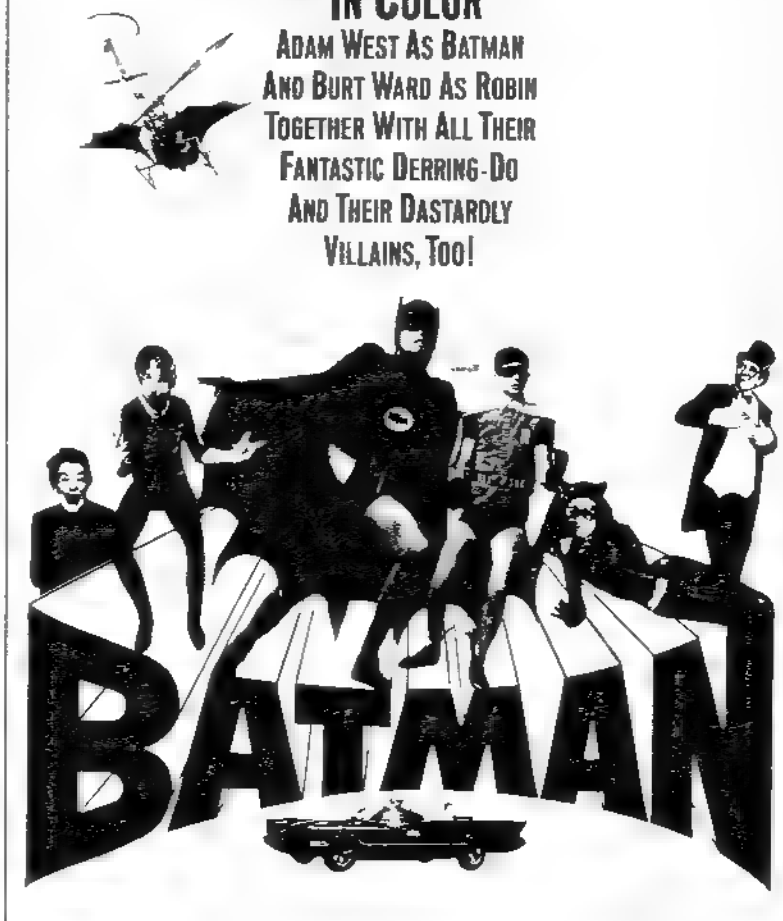
BATMAN fan at the outset (especially when he spends whole chapters dryly recounting the endless Guest Villains and directors). Throughout, West comes off like a nice, regular joe without many bad words to say about anybody (which will bore the crap outta readers in search of cheap thrills and decades-old gossip), relying on his genial storytelling of what it's like to go from starring in lousy spaghetti westerns and commercials, to overnight fame as the Caped Crusader. Plus, what it's like to suddenly have women begging for him to autograph their anatomy ("it's a bit of a challenge to write one's name on a quivering breast without using the other hand to steady it"). Unfortunately, West skims over his post-cowl, career slide and later clinkers like HELL RIDERS [SC#7] and MAXIM XUL [SC#4]. His more humorous tidbits include trick-or-treating in his Batman get-up, starring with Shatner and Cassavetes in the infamous ALEXANDER THE GREAT [SC#7] pilot ("the worst hour of TV in history") and, best of all, accidentally winding up in bed with a hermaphrodite he mistook for Donis Day. Speaking of the ladies, West comes off like a perfect gentleman with the fairer sex, devoting a scant page-and-a-half to his groupies since "a true crimefighter, like any other gentleman, never reveals all his secrets." How gallant. How...Zzzzzz...

BOY WONDER: MY LIFE IN TIGHTS by Burt Ward (Logical Figments; 300 pgs.; \$14.95). Though Adam West had little controversial to say in his bio, Burt Ward takes the opposite route with this hilarious romp through his super-horny super-stardom. They don't get much juicier than this cynical, illuminating lesson on fame, sex and uncomfortable tights, allowing the guy to rip loose after three

decades of keeping his mouth shut about the decadent underbelly of his career (and often sounding like an exuberant letter to Penthouse). When Ward was signed onto the groundbreaking show, who knew that the words of wisdom, scratched into a men's room stall ("Life is like a shit sandwich. The more bread you have, the less shit you taste.") would soon evolve into a line of nymphomaniacal BatFans ready to suck him dry. The sleazy delights began immediately after the show's premiere, when Ward (thanks to Adam's tutelage) becomes a "sexual vampire", with every woman fixated on his BatTrunks. Along his twisted path we get tales of visiting a nudist camp, screwing the jailbait daughter of a Missouri sheriff, getting hit on by Shelley Winters, recording with Frank Zappa, and visiting a convention with a pantie-free Julie Newmar. Oddly enough, when the same anecdotes appear in both star-bios, they sound like two totally different stories, and Ward's flashier, trashier prose is laced with a still-amazed-after-all-these-years exuberance. What else

FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THE MOTION PICTURE SCREEN IN COLOR

ADAM WEST AS BATMAN
AND BURT WARD AS ROBIN
TOGETHER WITH ALL THEIR
FANTASTIC DERRING-DO
AND THEIR DASTARDLY
VILLAINS, TOO!



would you expect with chapters eloquently entitled "On Your Knees, Girls, and Stay in Line!" And while West's book makes himself sound like a well-meaning stay-at-home, Ward turns him into a pompous, scene-stealing Caped Casanova who led Burt into the wide world of depravity with his "insatiable cobra". Ward even tackles rumors about West's sexual persuasion, and the notion that Batman and Robin were gay. Sure, Burt's continual sexual escapades get a little repetitive after awhile (as do his cheesy "Holy Scorched Scrotum" exclamations)—but as he digs deeper into the grime, there's enough self-deprecating attitude to keep himself from seeming like a schmuck. He even takes us through the '70s ("life's septic tank"), which has him dealing with an insane booking manager, bad break-ups, and embarrassing grade school gigs (recalled in frighteningly meticulous detail), while the final portion is devoted to Burt's less-action-packed (but more satisfying) current wife and happy home. This is a no-holds-barred treat for the BatDegenerate in each of us.

FILMMAKING ON THE FRINGE: The Good, The Bad, and The Deviant Directors by Maitland McDonagh (Citadel Press; 236 pgs.; \$18.95). This is a wonderful compendium of the American film

industry's unsung heroes, with fifteen chapters devoted to a wide spectrum of genre geniuses (and in a few cases, geniuses only in their *own* mind)—from younger, independent crapmeisters to Hollywood hotshots. The centerpiece of the book are lengthy interviews with her subjects, who detail their often-bumpy careers, while McDonagh does her best to keep the book from turning into P.R. swill. Of course, even the most probing questions are unable to squeeze anything interesting out of the interviewed-to-death likes of Jim Wynorski and Fred Olen Ray (who freely admit they're only in it for the money). But at least I've gained a little respect for David DeCoteau, who discusses once working with Wim Wenders, as well as the problems of being openly gay in the exploitation scene. For a more mainstream perspective, we get anecdotes aplenty from Sam Raimi, Paul Bartel and Joe Dante, in addition to a few odd (but interesting) choices, such as Ken Wiederhorn and William Condon. Personally, I thought the most best portions revolved around sexploitation directors Zalman King and Andy Sidaris, who've always gotten the shaft when it came to critical acceptance. In the process, Sidaris earns the biggest laughs when trashing Tinseltown ("Ron Howard, he's a stiff Norman Jewison, he can't direct furniture..."). It's all capped off with a detailed filmography that covers genre celebs the book skipped over. McDonagh certainly knows (and better still, appreciates) her subject matter, gives the directors room to spout their stuff, and has presented a collection that belongs in every genre fanatic's library.

CRITICAL VISION: Random Essays and Tracts Concerning Sex Religion Death. Edited by David Kerekes & David Slater (Headpress/Critical Vision; 252 pgs; \$19.95). Approach this book with caution, because this terrifically subversive fare will coldcock any unsuspecting reader with its grim collection of essays (complete with a gross-out cover sure to keep people sitting next to you on the subway thoroughly disturbed). Don't worry, deviants, because this goes far beyond the usual, wimpy constraints of U.S.-published fare. Centerpieces include a history of pornographic comic books; a look at the controversial, obscenity-busted Savoy publishing house, plus a meticulous examination of The Sunset Strip Murders, from the summer of 1980 (complete with gruesome police photos). In addition, there's a deconstruction of Punch's (from Punch 'n' Judy) violence 'n' misogyny, a cynical visit to a British evangelical crusade, and a look at consensual sexual violence entitled "Hitting Below the Belt." Without doubt, the best moments are the honest-to-goodness, ultra-skanky porno letters sprinkled throughout (with all of their horrible misspellings left intact), culled from adult magazines which didn't have the guts to print 'em. These include some of the most hilariously repugnant (and revealing) tidbits in recent memory—in particular, the incarcerated writers—and it's all highlighted with a six-page-long sexual episode that feels like some type of rancid, Herbert Selby porno-homage. In fact, this extreme textbook on the darkest niches of human behavior is so lovingly conceived that you begin to wonder if the editors are getting just as depraved as their subjects (personally, I'd like to think so).



THAT'S BLAXPLOITATION! by Darius James (St. Martin's Griffin; 200 pgs.; \$14.95). At long last, a book that digs deep into one of the freakiest, funniest and most fucked-out-of-your-head-on-cheap-wine genres to emerge from the grindhouse '70s. So grab a cold one (make that *several*), stumble to your nearest bookstore and drop some dough on this one, fans. In the process, this covers a lot of territory from the crappiest chunks of shit to indie honesty—complete with kickass interviews of Deuce icons like Antonio Fargas, Pam Grier (with a great story about her encounter with a blind-drunk John Lennon), and Melvin Van Peebles, the Godfather of the Kill Whitey movie, whose SWEET SWEETBACK galvanized a generation of Brothers. A fave is his chapter on the SHAFT movies, in which Darius admits he hates 'em and only included 'em because the white publishers told him to. So instead, he reprints a piss-your-pants-hilarious, unfilmed Saturday Night Live skit by Michael O'Donoghue that consists of a trailer for a lost, 1934 version of SHAFT in which he's a servant-boy ("Shaft is here!...He's out to wash your car!"). And let's not forget an enlightening encounter with Ralph Bakshi about COONSKIN—the final word on that unappreciated masterwork, with Darius getting deep into its tossing-racist-images-back-into-Whitey's-face subtext. Bursting with attitude and self-described "psychotic blather", his film reviews are dead-on but low on info. Even when Darius rips loose and veers from his subject matter (interviews with a pair of The Last Poets, pimp extraordinaire Iceberg Slim, and the scorchin' "Blackman's Guide to Seducing White Women with the Amazing Power of Voodoo"), you won't hear me bitchin', because if all you want is info, any white, suburban-bred video-geek (like me) can give you the simple facts. It's Darius who gives you the *real* dope. Don't miss out.

ASIAN TRASH CINEMA: THE BOOK 2 by Thomas Weisser (189 pgs.; Available for \$19.95 plus \$3 postage from Asian Trash Cinema, P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116). This digest-sized celebration of the crazed joys of Hong Kong cinema picks up where ATC's first volume ended. We get short reviews of everything released over the past couple years (plus older stuff that they missed the first time around)—not just gun-toting action and exploitation, but also comedy and melodrama (though when it comes to more arthouse-style pics, their criticism is primarily based on whether it's "boring"). That's not all, kids. Because there's also a director's filmography, listings of the major stars and their pics, and best of all, a lengthy section entitled THE ROOTS: MARTIAL ARTS, which is a rundown of all those great, badly dubbed kung fu movies that filled 42nd Street during its prime, from early Jackie Chans to all the crappy Bruce Lee clones. After all these years, it's great to finally get the cast and directors of these chopsocky classics. This is a terrific book, clueing you in on the latest new releases, and ushering novices through the extensive, often confusing world of HK moviemaking. One important note. Although I'm not a hardcore expert on these brain-numbing pics, several fans (both Chinese and U.S.-born) have pointed out various errors, which still makes this an invaluable guide, though perhaps not the end-all gospel on the subject.

VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS

Of course your local video stores suck! That means you've gotta reach deep into your piggy bank and support these mail order businesses, who'll keep you addicted with their demented wares for years to come.

BLACKEST HEART VIDEO, c/o Shawn Smith, 1291 Hays St. #360, San Leandro, CA 94577. Shawn's extensive listing features the meanest, nastiest, most obscure films imaginable. Includes many uncut and letterboxed editions.

FILM THREAT VIDEO, P.O. Box 3170, Los Angeles, CA 90078-3170. An exclusive line of underground auteurs including Richard Kern and Jorg Buttgerit. The sign of a cool catalog? All but one of their titles is slapped with an "Adults Only" warning.

LUMINOUS FILM & VIDEO WURKS, P.O. Box 1047, Medford, NY 11763. One of my personal faves, offering high-quality PAL transfers of everything from spaghetti westerns and pastaland gut-munchers, to obscure Godard, Greenaway and Seijun. Each tape comes with beautiful full color packaging.

REDEMPTION USA, Morano Movies, 8822 Second Avenue, North Bergen, NJ 07047. This overseas purveyor of the coolest, sexiest horror pics never released (legitimately) on U.S. video has *finally* come to American shores, with plenty of impressive upcoming treats.

SINISTER CINEMA, P.O. Box 4369, Medford, OR 97501-0168. A mind-boggling catalog crammed with classic horror, serials, silents, westerns, jungle camp, drive-in-style double bills and more. A B-movie addict's delight.

SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133. A jaw-dropping array of classic grindhouse fare, including rare Coffin Joe, Dave Friedman, and everything in between, bringing 42nd Street straight into your home. Mike Vraney's huge catalog is only \$5.

STARLIGHT VIDEO, P.O. Box 14222, Chicago, IL 60614-0222. A slim, but gritty catalog is loaded with a wide array of gems. There's a little bit of everything to keep you amused—European sleaze, Asian action classics, Blaxploitation, splatter, director's cuts, the works.

VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI, P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116-1917. One-of-a-kind mix of Eurotrash, Hong Kong and outrageous overseas delights. Best of all, VSoM subtitles many of their fave pics! Everything a serious movie fanatic needs to be a total video zombie—from obscure pornos to cult auteurs like Fuller and Melville.

[Editorial ramblings: continued] nipping on a bad movie, and turned it into a passive spectator sport where any bonehead can take root on their sofa, turn off their imagination, and let the TV make all the rude comments for 'em. Maybe it just pisses me off so much because I'm old enough to have experienced the grindhouse glory days, which makes one realize that MST3K is just a coach-potato, whitebread imitation of the real thing. The cathode ray equivalent of Pringles.

But enough of my nagging, and onto more personal matters: First off, thanks for all the warm congratulations from SC readers at the news of my engagement. Before continuing, allow me to address a couple of your questions.

1) No, just because I'm getting hitched doesn't mean that SHOCK CINEMA is going to close down. Sorry, but this isn't just some hobby—for (financial) better or worse, I plan on making it a near-full time enterprise (until it bankrupts me, of course, so tell all of your well-to-do friends and neighbors to buy several copies).

2) And no, I'm not going to get "too happy" once I'm married, and allow it to spill over into the usual SC bile. Because although my home life is splendid, the movies I watch still SUCK, and I have even less tolerance for the crappier ones, since they're bigger wastes of my time than ever before.

With that out of the way, let me happily announce that Anna Burmeister and I were married on December the 5th, 1995. And after hearing far too many teeth-clenching stories about weddings that spun out of the couples' control, we decided to run off to beautiful Las Vegas, the City of Broken Bank Accounts, for our much-anticipated ceremony. First off, it's so remarkably easy to get married in Vegas, that it's a wonder everybody doesn't take this route, instead of spending a fortune and suf-

fering through every drooling, smelly blight on your family tree, in order to receive a handful of wedding gifts that you never wanted in the first place. Instead, we did it up proud, with a week-long stay at the fabulous Flamingo (we figured that if it was good enough for our pal Bugsy Siegel, it was good enough for us). Even though the city is cleaning up its rep for the family trade, it's still a twisted town if you dig a bit—sorta like of a Six Flags aimed at Gamblers, Alcoholics and Deviants. A place where the bars never close and the drinks are ridiculously cheap (because if you're nine sheets to the wind, you're more liable to lose your kids' tuition money on the roulette wheel); where illegal immigrants stand on street corners, day and night, handing out ads for cheap hookers; and all-you-can-eat buffets are at every turn (of course, when you order a \$3.99 prime rib, it also *tastes* like a \$3.99 prime rib).

Anna and I arrived on a Monday and immediately picked The Candlelight Chapel for the big event, located directly across from Circus Circus (in an unexpected nod to the great Hunter S.), and the next day had a limo pick us up at the hotel and drive us to get our Marriage License. Adding a li'l local flavor, when we arrived at the License Bureau, the only other couple was a pimply kid who looked barely 18, his joy-barren bride (all of 14), and her mother, who was there to give approval of the marriage (as the bride snidely quipped, "You just signed away your daughter, Ma."). From there, it was onto our intimate little ceremony (which, one friend informed us, looked more like a Black Mass). And yes, despite my all-pervading skepticism, it was hideously romantic.

Of course, before hitting Vegas, we got into the spirit with two of the finest P.R. pieces available, CASINO and LEAVING LAS VEGAS. And al-

though Scorsese's Rat-Pack-era vision has long since disappeared in favor of theme hotels and amusement rides, if you close your eyes, you can still smell Nicolas Cage's suicidal drunk in every bar and nickel-slot hall (and believe me, we hit 'em all during our stay). We also discovered that if you get sick of the trendy hot spots, a gutter-eyed walk along the north end of the Strip will give you a taste of days gone by, thanks to its mile-long assortment of pawn shops, dilapidated wedding chapels, chintzy gift stores, and bail bonds joints. Of course, with such horrible entertainment in every direction, I'd love to report that we saw those high-permed assholes, Seigfried and Roy (wouldn't you love to see me review one of their shows?). Unfortunately, they were out of town, and even all the whiskey in Nevada couldn't convince me to spend my hard-earned cash on their replacement, Barry "Best Reason for Keeping Abortion Legal" Manilow.

This city is a drug. Period. And after only a couple days I (make that we) fell head over heels for the place. Hell, even Manhattan closes down once and a while, but not here. And if you hit the casinos after all the tourists have fled, at 5 a.m., the tables are still packed shoulder-to-shoulder with piss-drunk cowboys and Japanese businessman—in other words, the *real* gamblers, who make your lousy \$5 bet look like chump change when they're throwing away hundreds at a roll of the dice. Even better are Vegas' legitimately friendly people (I haven't seen those since...hell, I've *never* seen those!). With all that said and done, if I ever get fed up with the Our-Shit-Don't-Stink attitude of NYC and simply disappear without a clue, you'll probably find me chowing down breakfast at Binion's, sitting in Circus Circus' revolving bar, hanging out at Ray Dennis Steckler's video stores, or laughing my ass off at the latest, neon-encrusted tourist attractions. We'll see you there. —3/23/96

'ZINES & SMALL-PRESS PUBLICATIONS

Note: Remember, if not for people like these, you'd be forced to read nothing but PREMIERE (shudder)—so give 'em your undying support.

ANNABEL LEE (P.O. Box 2191, Sabadell 08200 BCN Spain). This beautiful 'zine from Spain suddenly appeared in my mailbox. But since I don't speak Spanish, I couldn't read the articles and schlockfilm reviews—still, it's loaded with enough sleazy pix to make it worth a look in any language.

ASIAN EYE (Colin Geddes, 253 College Street #108, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R5, Canada; \$5 plus \$2 postage). This monstrously thick ode to Asian cinema is amazing. Solid interviews and articles, plus instead of highlighting only new releases, they also devote plenty of space to older gems.

ASIAN TRASH CINEMA (P.O. Box 16-1917, Miami, FL 33116; Six issues for \$30. Single copies \$6). ATC has been on the cutting edge of the scene long before most of us realized HK cinema was anything more than just badly-dubbed Jackie Chan videos. A good foundation for anyone interested in the cutting edge of Asian dementia.

BLOODY DARLINGS (Lars Von Hegnet, Hindbaervej 17, 9000 Aalborg, Denmark). A cool, xerox-'zine focusing on the sickest cinematic delights. But since most of the text is in Danish, I couldn't understand a damned thing, outside of the cover, which proudly boasts "Vile Shit on Ugly Tape".

CASHIERS DU CINEMART (P.O. Box 2401, Riverview, MI 48192-7417; \$2 per issue). Though only five issues old, I've learned to love this digest-sized mag, thanks to its evocative, hilarious rants on film, video and beyond. #5's best feature is a bullshit-free overview of the Toronto Film Festival, complete with Tarantino anecdotes.

CINERAIDER (Richard Akiyama, P.O. Box 240226, Honolulu, HI 96824-0226; \$13 for 3 issues/single issues \$5 ppd.). A Hong Kong cinema digest, with well-written articles and reviews of new releases. Besides the usual action/trash, they also show a welcome appreciation of more arthouse fare.

CRITICAL CONDITION (Fred Adelman, 215 B Overmount Ave., West Paterson, NJ 07424-3251; \$9 for 4 issues). I love this 'zine, since Fred covers the same type of film & video crapola I treasure so dearly. Tons of reviews and obscure filmographies make this a treat.

DREADFUL PLEASURES (Mike Accomando, 650 Prospect Ave., Fairview, N.J. 07022; \$3). A cinematic tour down memory lane, complete with reviews of grindhouse fare, filmographies, and amazing ads from the era. Plus, his recollections of 42nd Street get me all misty for the good ol' days.

EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA (Craig Ledbetter, P.O. Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325; \$20 for 4 issues). When it comes to the wide world of European schlock/horror/westerns, Craig's mag is at the

top, unearthing the most obscure shit imaginable and tying it into a slick package of reviews and articles.

EXPLOITATION RETROSPECT (P.O. Box 10134, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0134; single issue: \$2 / 6 issue sub: \$10). Dan Taylor has been banging out this guide to fringe media for over 40 issues, which remains one of the most consistently entertaining—with tasty articles, music & film reviews.

FATAL VISIONS (P.O. Box 1184, Thornbury, VIC 3071, Australia; Single issues: \$6 U.S. Cash only). Michael Helms' mag continues to amaze me, with a scope and enthusiasm that keeps it a long-time favorite. A wild mix of horror, action, arthouse sleaze, and all the recent Hong Kong fare.

FILM THREAT VIDEO GUIDE (P.O. Box 3170, Los Angeles, CA 91505; \$5.95). Essential for any fan of underground cinema (though their most recent is a reprint-packed "Best Of" issue). Indie reviews, articles, and a razored sense of humor—this mag keeps FILM THREAT's original vision alive.

HITCH (Rod Lott, 5504 N. Tulsa Ave., Oklahoma City, OK 73112; \$3.50). The funniest goddamned 'zine I've seen all year. Loaded with oddball culture 'n' media bits, this is cover-to-cover hot shit. Plus, I nearly shot beer outta my nose while reading Lott's blistering Jerry Garcia obit.

HORRENDOUS! (Matt Bradshaw, P.O. Box 3412, Manchester, NH 03105-3412; \$5 for 4 issues). A cool newsletter that reviews the type of horror/exploitation slop you'll find in any video store's discount bin, while Matt's lengthy analyses of shit like BOARDING HOUSE are well-written and spot-on.

THE JOE BOB BRIGGS REPORT (P.O. Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221; send name & address for free issue). This hilarious newsletter from the King of the Drive-Ins covers the creme de la crapola, complete with Breast 'n' Body Counts. Briggs' reviews are more fun than actually watching this rotgut.

MOSHABLE (Lars Krogh, Post Restante, Algades, Postekspedition, 9000 Aalborg, Denmark; U.S.\$4.00). A music 'zine from Denmark loaded with interviews and reviews. No other mag would have the brilliance to put a Rudy Ray Moore interview only pages from a tribute to Tom Jones.

PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO (Michael J. Weldon, 3309 Rt.97, Narrowsburg, N.Y. 12764-6126; \$4). Buy it. Read it. Love it. Live it. Each new issue features several lengthy interviews with cult icons, plus the usual mind-boggling array of video reviews. If you don't have a subscription, what the fuck are you waiting for?

SAMHAIN (77 Exeter Road, Topsham, Exeter, Devon EX3 0LX, England; U.S.\$4.95). "Britain's Longest Running Horror Film Magazine" certainly deserves that honor, since it's loaded with reviews, interviews, obscure treats, plus a welcome appreciation for older unsung genre gems.

SCHLOCK (John Chilson, 3841 Fourth Ave. #192, San Diego, CA 92103; Single issues are free with an SASE). This "Paper of Low-Brow Cinema & Culture" might be thin, but it hits all the right bases, including loads of video and 'zine reviews, plus a fine-tuned appreciation for vinyl kitsch. Cheap too!

SCREAM (Darryl Mayeski, 490 S. Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702-3765; \$15 for 4 issues). Nicely produced and loaded with photos, this slick 'zine mostly focuses on the horror realm, offering movie reviews and articles—ranging from '50s drive-in crap to the latest (sleaziest) video releases, with some demented tidbits 'round the edges.

SHEMP! The Lowlife Culture Magazine (c/o Larry Yoshida, 593 Waikala Street, Kahului, HI 96732-1736; \$1 per issue plus 2 stamps). Packed with attitude, reviews and the usual slapdash layout, this crude 'n' cool digest has enough raw enthusiasm to make it a guilty pleasure.

SUSPECT CULTURE! (Suspect Culture Magazine, 605 Markham Street, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 2L7, Canada; \$5.95). Their premiere issue came out a while ago, but I hope another is in the works. Because this is a spectacular trip into fringe media, including intelligent interviews with auteurs like Dusan Makavejev, Bruce LaBruce and Beth B.

TERMINAL BRAIN ROT (Mike Huegen, 7312 Reynard Lane, Charlotte, NC 28215; \$1 plus 2 stamps). A digest-sized journal, crammed with video 'n' 'zine reviews; cool illos; musical tastes that run from The Ventures to Brownsville Station; plus riotous personal rants (such as a snot rocket aimed straight at Led Zep).

3 A.M. (Joe Johnson, 152 West 3rd Street, Oil City, PA 16301; \$2). A terrific rag that harkens back to the 'Zine World's lovable heyday, when personality mattered more than polish. The centerpiece of the latest (v.2 #1) is a hilarious visit to a Chiller Theatre con. Plus lotsa tiny, eye-straining text.

VEX (P.O. Box 319, Roselle, NJ 07203; \$3). For nothing else, the premiere issue is worth having for its lengthy profile on the laughable film career of O.J. Simpson. So grab a cold 40 and take a tour of trash cinema which even includes the kung fu classic KILL AND KILL AGAIN.

VIDEO JUNKIE MAGAZINE (Thomas Simmons, P.O. Box 4051, Ventura, CA 93007; Single issue: \$5 plus \$2 postage, or \$24 for 4 issue sub). The premiere issue of this thick, terrific looking mag is crammed with spot-on reviews, articles on everything from Hong Kong to Hammer, and has the good taste to feature Godzilla on their cover.

VIDEOSCOPE (P.O. Box 216, Ocean Grove, NJ 07756; \$19.97 for six issues). Want the low-down on all the straight-to-video slop? With The Phantom of the Movies' new, expanded format, this has become an essential guide for cathode ray vidiots, loaded with reviews of all the grungiest new releases.

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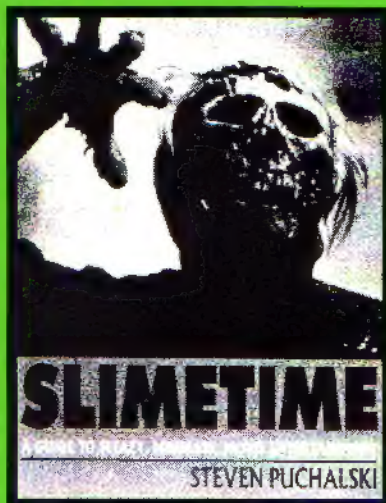
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SLIMETIME

A GUIDE TO SLEAZY, MINDLESS, MOVIE ENTERTAINMENT

Steven Puchalski

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Slimetime is the culmination of Steven Puchalski's obsession with sleaze cinema and bad places in which to view it. Puchalski's research for **Slimetime** was garnered in days before multiplexes, when cinemas were small and dirty and still played 'socially valid' pictures like **Ilsa, Harem Keeper of the Oil Sheiks** and **Matango, The Fungus of Terror**. As hard as nails and hilariously caustic, Puchalski's observations are consistently on the money.

Many of the motion pictures under review in **Slimetime** have never seen a major release, some were big hits, others have 'vanished'. To compliment the wealth of reviews – some by guest writers – there are essays on specific film genres such as **Blaxploitation, Drug Movies** and **Biker Movies**. As well as an **Index** and a guide to further reading, **Slimetime** is *illustrated throughout* with suitably obscure and esoteric ad mats.

PRESS REACTION

"The best all-purpose sleaze/horror/trash fanzine since **The Sleazoid Express**. **Slimetime** really knows its scummy material..." –Stefan Jaworzyn, **Shock Xpress**

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"Some of the best bizarre film commentary going... With sharp, no-nonsense verdicts." –Manohla Dargis, **The Village Voice**

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Steven Puchalski is a freelance writer living in the depths of New York City's East Village. In addition to publishing his own magazine, **Shock Cinema**, he is a regular contributor to **Fangoria**, has written for **Shock Xpress**, **European Trash Cinema** and **Sci-Fi Channel Entertainment**, and has seen far too many movies for a person his age. His favourite indulgences include shots of Bushmills, ancient cemeteries, truck stop diners, and most recently, the lights of Las Vegas – where he spent a lengthy honeymoon with his lovely new bride.

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